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FAIRY TALES

VOLUME II

LANSING



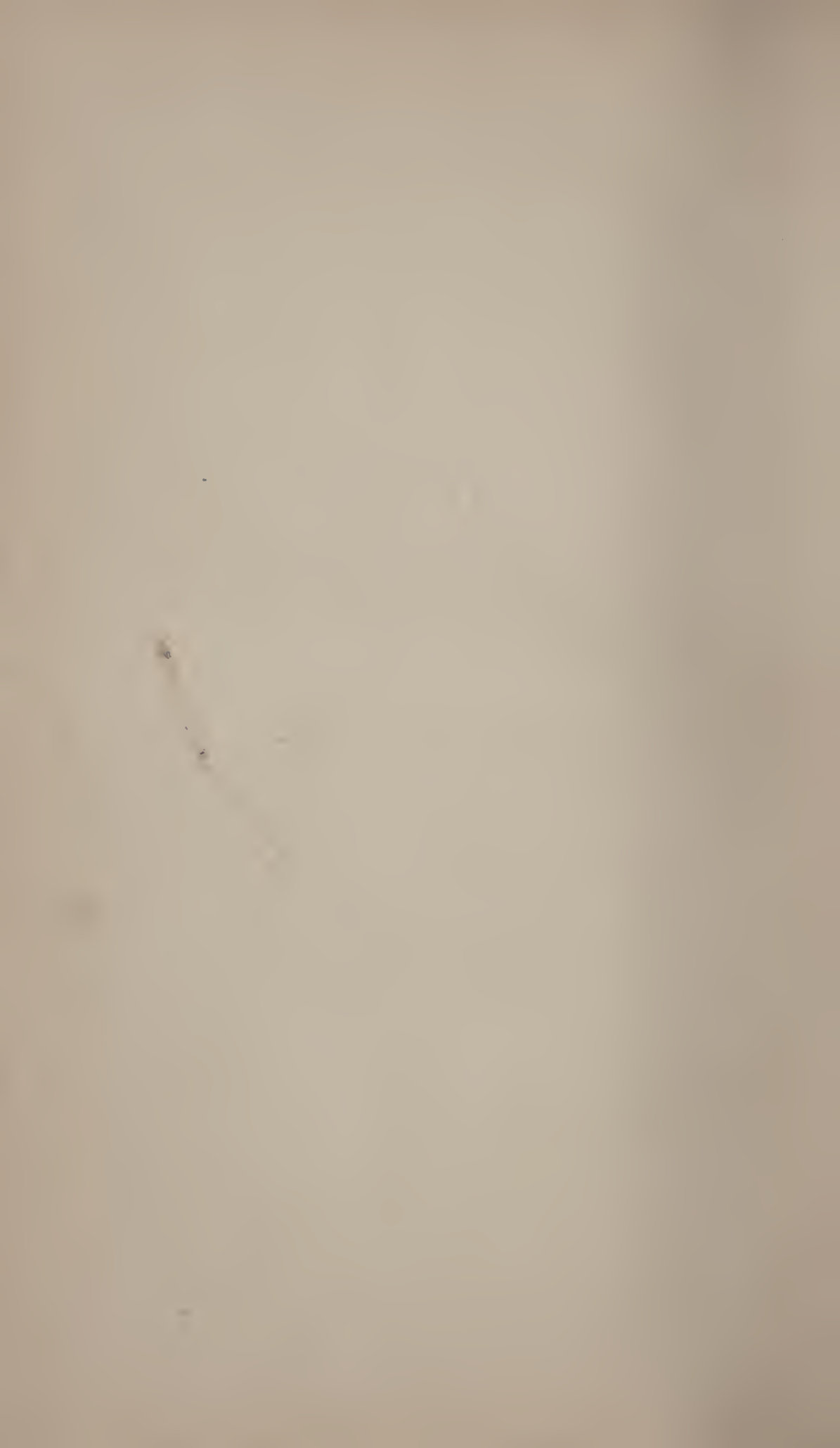


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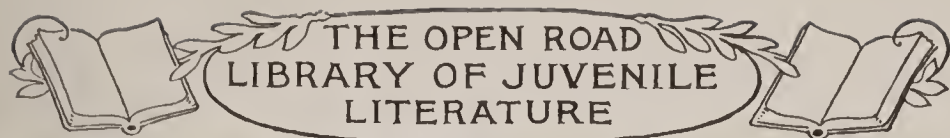
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"Afoot and light-hearted
I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world
before me."



FAIRY TALES

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
MARION FLORENCE LANSING M.A.

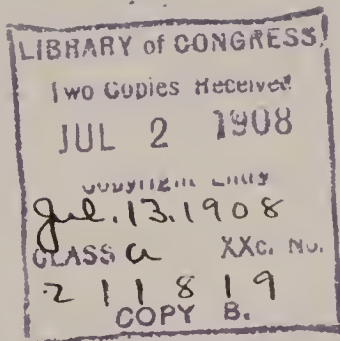
VOL. II

ILLUSTRATED BY
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PREFACE

The division of *Fairy Tales* into two volumes was rather for the sake of keeping the books small and of uniform size in the series, "The Open Road Library," than because there was any difference in the age of children addressed. Some of the best stories have been reserved for this book.

The plan has been to gratify interest awakened in the tales of the first volume by a parallel in the second. Thus in the first we had the droll of "Hans in Luck," to which "Clever Alice" corresponds in this. The "Frog Prince" and "Beauty and the Beast" are paralleled by the "White Cat," in which a princess instead of a prince is restored from the spell of an animal disguise. The first volume recounts in "Doll-in-the-Grass" the story of twelve sons sent out into the world by their royal father to win their fortunes; the second tells of six sons, who later become Pleiades, sent forth to learn trades. And so the comparison might be continued. The incidents of fairy and folk lore appear in numberless combinations. Close similarity of plot has been avoided, and stories which correspond in general motif have been put in different volumes. About an equal number of tales from

each of the great story-tellers — Perrault, Andersen, Grimm, etc. — is to be found in each book.

The atmosphere of these tales is healthful, and their tone, while not in most cases didactic, is distinctly moral and uplifting. In a simple and direct way right is rewarded and wrong is discountenanced; the thief among the six brothers has to be the palest star in the Pleiades. The grotesque and horrible have been introduced only where they are so exaggerated that no sane child would fail to appreciate their extravagance. Cruel stepmothers are a tradition of fairy lore, but tales of cruel brothers and sisters do not appear in these volumes.

We have discriminated between these fairy tales and stories of a more heroic nature, which lay claim to having actually happened in some stated place. Tales like "Jack the Giant Killer" and "Tom Thumb," in which this saga element is predominant, have been carried forward into a succeeding volume, *Tales of Old England*. As in the last pages of the *Rhymes and Stories* a few of the simplest fairy tales were introduced, so this book leads from the supernatural of the fairy tale to the heroic of the saga.

M. F. LANSING

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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FAIRY TALES

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD

ONCE upon a time there lived in a distant land a King and Queen who were very unhappy because they had no children; they were more sorry than words can tell.

At last, however, the Queen had a daughter. There was a very fine christening. For her godmothers the little Princess had all the fairies that could be found in the land (there were seven in all), so that each of them might give her a gift, as was the custom of fairies in those days. By this means the Princess would be sure to have all the perfections imaginable.

After the christening was over, all the company returned to the palace, where a great feast was spread for the fairies. Before

each fairy was placed a magnificent cover, with a case of massive gold in which were a spoon, a fork, and a knife, all of pure gold set with diamonds and rubies. But as they were all sitting at table, they saw coming into the hall a very old fairy, who had not been invited because it was more than fifty years since she had been out of a certain tower, and she was believed to be either dead or enchanted.

The King ordered a cover laid for her, but he could not give her a case of gold such as had been given to the others, for only seven had been made. The old fairy fancied she was slighted, and muttered some threats between her teeth. One of the young fairies who sat beside her heard these threats, and judging that she might give the little Princess some unlucky gift, went, as soon as they rose from the table, and hid herself behind the hangings. In this way she could be the one to speak last, and might be able to repair, in so far as it was possible, any evil which the old fairy might intend to do.

Meanwhile the fairies began to bestow their gifts upon the Princess. The youngest gave for her gift that she should be the most beautiful person in the world; the next, that



she should have the wisdom and understanding of an angel; the third, that she should have wonderful grace in everything that she did; the fourth, that she should dance perfectly; the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale; and the sixth, that she should play with the greatest charm and skill on every kind of musical instrument.

When the old fairy's turn came she stepped forward, shaking her head more with spite than with age, and said that the Princess should pierce her hand with a spindle and die of the wound. This terrible gift made the whole company tremble, and everybody began to weep. At this very instant the young fairy came out from behind the hangings and, in a clear voice, said: "Be of good cheer, O King and Queen; not so shall your daughter die. It is true that I have not the power to undo entirely what my elder has done. The Princess shall indeed pierce her hand with a spindle; but instead of dying of the wound she shall only fall into a deep sleep, which shall last a hundred years, at the end of which a King's son shall come and wake her."

The King resolved to do all in his power to avoid the misfortune foretold by the old fairy. He immediately issued an edict forbidding any one, on pain of death, to spin with a distaff and spindle, or even to have a spindle in his house.

Fifteen or sixteen years afterward, when the King and Queen were at one of their country villas, the young Princess was running about one day in the castle. She went from room to room till she came to the top of a tower, where a good old woman was sitting alone, spinning with her spindle. This good woman had never heard of the King's edict against spindles.

"What are you doing there, my good woman?" said the Princess.

"I am spinning, my pretty child," said the old woman, who did not know who she was.

"Oh, how pretty!" exclaimed the Princess. "How do you do it? Let me see if I can do it."

She had no sooner taken the spindle than, either because she was very quick and a trifle heedless, or because the decree of the fairy has so ordained, she pierced her hand with it and fell in a swoon.

The good old woman, in great alarm, cried out for help. People came running in from all directions. They threw water on

the Princess's face; they unlaced her; they struck her on the palms of her hands and rubbed her temples with cologne water; but nothing would bring her to.

Then the King, who had come up on hearing the noise, remembered the prediction of the fairies. He knew very well that this must come to pass, since the fairies had decreed it. He had the Princess carried into the finest apartment in the palace, and laid upon a bed embroidered with gold and silver. One would have taken her for a little angel, she was so beautiful; her cheeks were carnation, and her lips like coral. Her eyes were closed, it is true, but she was heard to breathe softly, which satisfied those about her that she was not dead. The King gave orders that they should let her sleep quietly until the time came for her to awake.

The good fairy who had saved her life by condemning her to sleep a hundred years was in the kingdom of Mataquin, twelve thousand leagues away, when this accident happened to the Princess; but she was promptly told of

it by a little dwarf who had a pair of seven-league boots, — that is, boots with which he could cover seven leagues of ground at a single stride. The fairy set out immediately, and arrived at the castle about an hour later in a fiery chariot drawn by dragons.

The King handed her out of the chariot. She approved everything he had done; but, as she had great foresight, she thought that when the Princess awoke she would be much perplexed and troubled at finding herself all alone in this old palace. So this is what she did. She touched with her wand everything in the palace except the King and Queen, — governesses, maids of honor, ladies of the bedchamber, gentlemen, officers, stewards, cooks, scullions, guards, porters, pages, and footmen; she touched also all the horses in the stable with their grooms, the great mastiffs in the courtyard, and even little Pouste, the Princess's tiny spaniel that was lying on the bed beside her.

The moment she touched them they all fell asleep, not to wake again till their mistress

did. This was done in order that they might be ready to serve her again when she had need of them. Even the spits that stood before the fire, as full as they could hold of partridges and pheasants, fell asleep, and the fire itself as well. All this was done in a moment. Fairies are not long in doing their business!

And now the King and Queen, having kissed their dear child without waking her, left the castle, issuing a proclamation that no one should come near it. These commands were not necessary, for in less than a quarter of an hour there grew up all around the park such a vast number of trees great and small, and of bushes and brambles, twining one within another, that neither man nor beast could pass through, and nothing could be seen but the very top of the towers of the palace, and that, too, only from a great distance. Every one knew that this was the work of the fairy in order that the Princess, while she slept, should have nothing to fear from curious people.

A hundred years passed, and the kingdom was in the hands of another royal family. The son of the reigning King was hunting one day in that part of the country, and asked what those towers were which he saw in the middle of a great dense wood. Every one answered according as he had heard. Some said it was an old haunted castle; others, that all the witches of the country held their revels there. But the common opinion was that an ogre lived there, and that he carried thither all the little children he could catch, secure that no one would follow him, for he alone had power to make his way through the wood.

The Prince did not know what to believe; but finally an aged man spoke to him thus: "May it please your Highness, more than fifty years ago I heard my father tell that there was in that castle a Princess, the most beautiful ever seen; and that she was to sleep there a hundred years, and that she would be wakened by a King's son for whom she was waiting."

The young Prince was all on fire at these words. He had not a moment's doubt that he was the one to carry through this rare adventure, and filled with love and longing for glory he instantly resolved to look into the matter. As soon as he drew near the wood, all the great trees, the bushes, and the brambles gave way of themselves to let him pass through. He walked toward the castle which he saw at the end of a long avenue. As he looked around he was surprised to see that none of his people had been able to follow him, for the trees had closed in again as soon as he had passed between them. He did not stop or turn back for this; a young Prince, drawn on by love and the desire for glory, is always valiant.

He came into a spacious outer court where the sight that met his eyes was of a kind to freeze him with horror. A frightful silence reigned over all; the appearance of death was everywhere, and there was nothing to be seen but the bodies of men and animals stretched out on every side, and apparently



lifeless. He noticed, however, that the faces of the guards were ruddy, and he knew that they were only asleep; besides, the goblets standing by them, with a few drops of wine left in them, plainly showed that they had fallen asleep while drinking their wine.

He then crossed a court paved with marble, went up the stairs, and came into the guard-room, where soldiers were standing. They were drawn up in ranks, with muskets on their shoulders, and were snoring loudly. He went through several rooms full of gentlemen and ladies, some standing and others sitting, but all asleep. He entered a gilded chamber and saw on a bed, the curtains of which were all drawn back, the most beautiful sight he had ever looked upon,—a Princess, who appeared to be about fifteen or sixteen years old, and who was so dazzlingly beautiful that she seemed to belong to another world. He approached with trembling and admiration, and fell down upon his knees before her.

Then, as the end of the enchantment was come, the Princess awoke, and looking tenderly at the young man, said: "Is it you, my Prince? You have waited a long while."

The Prince, charmed with these words, and much more with the manner in which they were spoken, did not know how to show his joy and gratitude. He assured her that he loved her better than himself. Then they forgot all else as they talked together of their love. She was perhaps more prepared for it than he, for it is very probable (though history says nothing of it) that the good fairy, during so long a sleep, had given her pleasant dreams. They talked together for four hours, and still they had not said half that they wished to say.

In the meantime, all the palace had been awakened with the Princess. Every one thought at once of his particular business, and as they were not in love they realized that they were extremely hungry. The chief lady in waiting, who was as hungry as the rest, finally became impatient and announced

to the Princess that the meal was served. The Prince took the Princess by the hand. She was magnificently dressed, but he took care not to tell her that her costume was like that of his great-grandmother as he had seen it in pictures. She looked not a bit the less charming and beautiful for that.

They passed into the great hall lined with mirrors, where they supped, attended by the officers of the Princess. The violins and clarinets played old tunes, but they were excellent, though they had not been played for a hundred years. After supper, without losing any time, the lord almoner married them in the chapel of the castle.

When they left the castle the next day to return to the home of the Prince, they were followed by all the retinue of the Princess. They marched down the long avenue, and the wood opened before them to let them pass through. Outside they met the Prince's followers, who had been waiting in great anxiety and were overjoyed to see their master again. When they had gone a little way

they turned to look back at the castle, but behold! there was no castle to be seen, and no wood; castle and wood had vanished, but the Prince and Princess went gayly away, and when the old King and Queen died they reigned in their stead.



THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

MANY years ago there lived an Emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them. He cared nothing about his soldiers, or about the theater, or about driving, except for the sake of showing off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a King, "He is in the council chamber," here they always said, "The Emperor is in his wardrobe."

In the great city in which he lived life was very gay. Every day many strangers arrived. One day two rogues came who gave themselves out to be weavers, and said that they could weave the finest cloth any one could imagine. Not only were its colors and patterns uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes which were made of this material possessed the wonderful property of becoming invisible to any one who was not

fit for the office he held, or who was uncommonly stupid.

“Those must indeed be capital clothes,” thought the Emperor. “If I wore them I could find out which men in my kingdom are unfit for the offices they hold; I could



distinguish the wise men from the stupid. Yes, some of that cloth must be woven for me at once.”

So he paid both the rogues a large sum of money in advance so that they might begin their work at once.

They put up two looms and went through all the motions of weaving, but they had nothing at all on their looms. They also demanded the finest silk and the purest gold

thread,—all of which they put into their own pockets; and they went on working away at the empty looms all day long and far into the night.

“I should like to know how those weavers are getting on with the stuff,” thought the Emperor. But he felt a little queer when he remembered that any one who was stupid or unfit for his post would not be able to see it. He felt very sure that he had nothing to fear for himself, but still he preferred to send some one else first to see how the weaving was getting on. Everybody in the town knew what a wonderful power the cloth had, and all were curious to see how bad or how stupid their neighbors were.

“I will send my faithful and honored old minister to the weavers,” thought the Emperor. “He can judge best what the stuff is like, for he is clever, and no one fulfills his duties better than he does.”

So the good old minister went to the hall where the two rogues sat working at the empty looms.

“Heaven preserve us!” thought the old minister, opening his eyes wide. “I cannot see anything at all.” But he did not say so.

Both the rogues begged him to be so good as to step a little closer, and asked him if he did not think the pattern and the colors



beautiful. They pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old minister walked forward, rubbing his eyes; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing there. “Mercy on us!” thought he; “can I be so stupid? I have never thought so, and nobody must know it. Can it be that I am not fit for my

office? No, it will certainly never do to say that I cannot see the cloth."

"Have you nothing to say about it?" asked one of the weavers.

"Oh, it is beautiful! quite charming!" answered the old minister, looking through his spectacles. "What a fine pattern! and what colors! Yes, I will tell the Emperor that it pleases me very much."

"Now we are delighted to hear you say so," said both the weavers, and then they named all the colors, and described the peculiar pattern.

The old minister paid great attention, so that he might be able to repeat it to the Emperor when he got back.

Then the rogues wanted more money, more silk, and more gold, to use in their weaving, but they put it all into their own pockets; not a single thread was ever put on the loom, but they went on working at the empty looms as before.

Soon the Emperor sent another worthy statesman to see how the weaving was

getting on, and how soon the cloth would be finished. It was the same with him as with the first one: he looked and looked, but as there was nothing on the loom he could see nothing.

"Is it not a beautiful piece of cloth?" asked the rogues, and they pointed to and described the splendid material that was not there at all.

"I am not stupid," thought the man, "so it must be that I am not fit for my good office. It is very strange, but I must not let it be noticed."

So he praised the cloth which he did not see, and expressed to them his delight in the beautiful colors and the charming pattern.

"Yes, it is perfectly beautiful," he reported to the Emperor.

Everybody in the town was talking of the magnificent cloth. The Emperor himself wished to see it while it was still on the loom. With a great crowd of carefully selected men, among whom were the two worthy statesmen who had been before, he

went to visit the cunning rogues, who were weaving away with might and main, but without fiber or thread.

“Is it not splendid?” said both the old statesmen. “See, Your Majesty, what a pattern! what colors!” And they pointed to the empty loom, for they believed others could see the cloth quite well.

“What!” thought the Emperor; “I can see nothing. This is terrible! Am I stupid? Am I not fit to be Emperor? That would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me. Oh, it is *very* beautiful!” he said aloud. “It has my highest approval.” And then he nodded pleasantly as he examined the empty loom, for he would not say that he could see nothing.

His whole suite gazed and gazed, and saw no more than the others; but, like the Emperor, they all exclaimed, “Oh, it is beautiful! beautiful!” and they advised him to wear the splendid new clothes for the first time at the great procession which was soon to take place.

“Splendid! Gorgeous! Magnificent!” went from mouth to mouth. Every one seemed delighted, and the Emperor gave the rogues the title of “Court Weavers of the Emperor.”

During the whole night before the day on which the procession was to take place, the rogues sat up and worked by the light of sixteen candles. The people could see that they were hard at work, finishing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth from the loom; they cut into the air with huge scissors; they stitched with needles with no thread; and at last they said, “Now the clothes are finished!”

The Emperor came himself, with his noblest courtiers, and each rogue lifted his arm just as if he were holding something, and said, “See! here are the trousers! here is the coat! here is the cloak!” and so on.

“It is as light as a spider's web. One would almost think one had nothing on; but that is the beauty of it!”

“Yes!” said all the courtiers, but they could see nothing, for there was nothing there.

“Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to take off your clothes,” said the rogues; “then we will put on the new clothes here before the great mirror.”

The Emperor took off his clothes, and the rogues pretended to put upon him one garment after another. The Emperor turned round and round in front of the mirror.

“How well they look! How beautifully they fit!” said everybody. “What material! and what colors! That is a splendid costume!”

“The canopy which is to be carried over your Majesty in the procession is waiting outside,” announced the master of ceremonies.

“Well, I am ready,” replied the Emperor. “Don’t the clothes look well?” and he turned round again in front of the mirror to appear as if he were admiring his costume.

The chamberlains who were to carry the train stooped and put their hands near the floor as if they were lifting it; then they pretended to be holding something in the air. They would not have it noticed that they could see nothing.



So the Emperor went along in the procession under the splendid canopy, and all the people in the streets and at the windows said: "How beautiful the Emperor's new clothes are! That train is splendid! and how well they fit!"

No one wanted it to be noticed that he could see nothing, for in that case he would be unfit for his office, or else very stupid. None of the Emperor's clothes had been such a success as these.

"But he has nothing on," said a little child.

"Just hear the innocent!" said the father; and each one whispered to his neighbor what the child had said.

"But he has nothing on," cried out all the people at last.

This struck the Emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought to himself, "I must go through with the procession now."

So he held himself stiffer than ever, and the chamberlains held on tightly, carrying the train which was not there at all.

THE GOLDEN GOOSE

THERE was once a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was thought to be very stupid and silly. Everybody used to tease and mock him.

One day the eldest son wanted to go into the forest to hew wood, and before he started, his mother gave him a fine sweet cake and a bottle of wine to take with him. In the forest he met a gray old man, who bade him "good day," and said, "Give me a piece of your cake and a sip of your wine, for I am very hungry and thirsty."

But the prudent youth replied: "If I give you my cake and wine, I shall have none for myself. Be off with you!"

And he left the little man standing there and went on his way. He began to cut down a tree, but he had not been at work long before he made a false stroke, and the ax cut so deeply into his arm that he had to go

home and have it bound up. This was the little gray man's doing.

The second son was now the one to go into the forest to cut wood, and the mother gave him, as she had given the eldest, a sweet cake and a bottle of wine. The little



old gray man met him, too, and asked for a piece of cake and a drink of wine; but the second son made the same sensible answer: "What I give to you I cannot have for myself. Be off!"

And he left the little man standing there and went on his way. His punishment,

however, was not long delayed; when he had made a few strokes at the tree he struck himself in the leg, and had to be carried home.

Then the stupid son said to his father, "Father, let me go and cut wood."

The father replied: "Your brothers have hurt themselves. Leave it alone. You know nothing about it."

But he begged so long that at last the father said, "Well, go then; you will be wiser when you have hurt yourself."

His mother gave him a cake made with water and baked in the cinders, and with it a bottle of sour beer. When he came to the forest the little old gray man met him in the same way, greeted him, and said, "Give me a piece of your cake and a taste of your wine; I am very hungry and thirsty."

"I have only a cake baked in ashes," replied the simple youth, "and sour beer. If that will suit you, we will sit down and eat together."

So they sat down; but when the youth took out his cake it was a fine sweet cake,

and the sour beer was good wine. They ate and drank, and then the little man said: "Because you have a good heart and are willing to share what you have, I will give you good luck. There stands an old tree. Cut it down and you will find something at the roots." Then the old man took leave of him.

The youth went and cut down the tree, and when it fell, there sitting among the roots was a goose, whose feathers were of pure gold. He picked it up, and, taking it with him, went to an inn where he meant to pass the night. The landlord had three daughters, who, as soon as they saw the goose, were very curious as to what kind of a bird it could be, and wanted to have one of its golden feathers.

The eldest thought to herself, "I'll soon find a chance to pull out a feather"; and as soon as the youth went out of the room she seized the goose by the wing; but her hand stuck fast and she could not get away.

Very soon the second sister came in, thinking only of how she might pluck a

feather for herself; but she had hardly touched her sister when she found herself held fast.

At last the third sister came also, with the same intention. Then the others screamed out: "Keep away! For goodness' sake, keep away!"

But she did not understand why she should keep away. "If the others are there by the bird, why should not I be, too?" she thought, and ran to them; but as soon as she had touched her sister she was made fast, too. So they had to spend the night with the goose.

The next morning the youth took the goose under his arm and started off, without troubling himself about the three girls, who were still hanging on. They were obliged to keep on the run behind him, now to the right and now to the left, as the fancy seized him.

In the middle of the fields the parson met them, and when he saw the procession he said: "For shame, you good-for-nothing girls!

What are you running across the fields after this young man for? Is that seemly?"

He took the youngest by the hand to pull her away, but as soon as he touched her hand he also stuck fast, and was obliged himself to run along behind.

Before long the sexton came by and saw his master, the parson, running along after three girls. He was astonished, and called after him: "Halloo, your reverence! whither away so quickly? Do not forget that we have a christening to-day!" and running after him he took him by his gown, but was also held fast to it.

While the five were trotting along thus, one behind the other, two laborers came by, with their hoes, from the fields. The parson called out to them and begged them to release him and the sexton; but they had hardly touched the sexton when they, too, were caught fast, and now there were seven of them running behind the youth and the goose.

After a while the youth came to a city where a King ruled who had a daughter who

was so serious that no one could make her laugh. So the King had made a decree that whoever could make her laugh should have her in marriage. When the youth heard this he went with his goose and all his train before the Princess, and as soon as she saw the seven people continually on the trot, one behind the other, she began to laugh heartily, as if she could never stop. Then the youth asked to have her for his wife, and the wedding was celebrated. After the King's death he inherited the kingdom, and lived long and happily with his wife.



THE ELVES AND THE SHOE- MAKER

THERE was once a shoemaker who, through no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had only leather enough for one pair of shoes. So in the evening he cut out the shoes which he intended to begin upon the next morning, and since he had a good conscience he lay down quietly, said his prayers, and fell asleep.

In the morning he was preparing to sit down to work, when he looked, and there stood the shoes all finished on his table. He was so astonished that he did not know what to say. He took the shoes in his hand to examine them inside and out; and they were so neatly made that not a stitch was out of place, showing that they were done by a master hand.

Very soon a customer came in, and because the shoes pleased him so much he paid more

than the ordinary price for them. With this money the shoemaker was able to purchase leather for two pairs of shoes. He cut them out in the evening, and next day was about to go to work with fresh courage; but there was no need for him to work, for the two pairs of shoes stood beautifully finished on his table. Presently customers came in, who paid him so well that he was able to buy leather for four pairs of shoes. The following morning he found the four pairs finished, and so it went on; what he cut out in the evening was finished in the morning, so that he was soon in comfortable circumstances again, and at last was becoming really prosperous.

One evening, not long before Christmas, the shoemaker said to his wife, "What do you think of staying up to-night to see who it is that lends us this helping hand?"

The wife liked the idea; so they lighted a candle and hid themselves in a corner of the room behind some clothes which were hanging there. At midnight came two little naked men, who sat down at the shoemaker's

table, took up the work which was cut out, and set to work so nimbly, stitching, sewing, and hammering with their little fingers, that the shoemaker could not take his eyes off them. They did not stop till everything was finished and the shoes stood ready on the table; then they ran quickly away.

The next day the wife said to her husband: "The little men have made us rich, and we must show them how grateful we are. They must be almost frozen, running about with nothing on. I'll tell you what we'll do; I will make them little shirts, and coats, and vests, and trousers, and knit them stockings, and you shall make each of them a little pair of shoes."

The shoemaker was pleased with this plan, and on Christmas Eve, when everything was ready, they laid out the presents on the table instead of the usual work, and hid themselves to see how the little men would behave.

At midnight they came bounding in, and were about to set to work; but there was no leather to be seen, only these charming little clothes. At first they were astonished, and



then perfectly delighted. With the greatest speed they put on and smoothed down the pretty clothes, singing,

“Now we are boys so fine to see,
Why should we longer cobblers be?”

Then they danced and skipped, and leaped over chairs and benches. At last they danced out at the door. From this time on they came no more; but the shoemaker prospered as long as he lived, and succeeded in all his undertakings.

THE KING OF THE CATS

MANY years ago there lived in the north of Scotland, in a very lonely house, far from all other houses, two young men who were brothers. An old woman used to do their cooking, and there was no one else, unless we count her cat and their dogs, within miles of them.

One autumn afternoon the elder of the two said he would not go out; so the younger one went alone to follow the path where they had been shooting the day before. He intended to return home before sunset. However, he did not do so, and the older brother became very uneasy as he watched and waited in vain, till long after their usual supper-time. At last he returned, wet and exhausted, nor did he explain why he was so late. But after supper, when the two brothers were seated before the fire, the dogs lying at their feet and the old woman's black cat sitting gravely,

with half-shut eyes, on the hearth, the young man began to tell his story.

“ You must be wondering,” said he, “ what made me so late. I have had a very strange adventure to-day; I hardly know what to say about it. I went, as I told you I should, along our yesterday’s route. A mountain fog came on just as I was about to turn homeward, and I completely lost my way. I wandered about for a long time, not knowing where I was, till at last I saw a light, and made for it, hoping to get help. As I came near it disappeared, and I found myself close to a large oak tree. I climbed into the branches the better to look for the light, and behold! there it was right beneath me, inside the hollow trunk of the tree. I seemed to be looking down into a church, where a funeral was taking place. I heard singing, and saw a coffin surrounded by torches, all carried by — But there! I know you won’t believe me if I tell you.”

His brother eagerly begged him to go on. The dogs were sleeping quietly, but the cat

was sitting up and seemed to be listening as carefully and attentively as the man. Both brothers found themselves watching the cat as the young man took up the story.



“Yes,” he continued, “it is as true as I sit here. The coffin and the torches were both carried by cats, and upon the coffin was marked a crown and scepter!”

He got no further, for the black cat started up, shrieking, “Good gracious! old Peter’s dead, and I’m King o’ the Cats!” then rushed up the chimney and was seen no more.

THE FIR TREE

FAR away in the forest stood a pretty little fir tree. The warm sun shone upon it, the fresh breezes blew about it, but the fir tree was not happy. All about it were many tall companions, pines and firs, and the little fir tree wanted to be tall like them. So it did not heed the warm sunlight, or the soft air which fluttered its leaves, or even the little peasant children who passed by, prattling merrily. Sometimes the children would bring a basketful of raspberries or strawberries, and seat themselves near the fir tree, saying of the tree, "What a pretty little one this is!" which made it feel more unhappy than ever.

And yet, all this time, the tree grew a whole joint or ring taller every year; for by the number of rings on the trunk of a fir tree we can tell its age.

Still, as it grew, it complained, "Oh, if I were only as tall as the other trees! then I

should spread out my branches on every side, and my crown would overlook the wide world. The birds would build their nests in



my branches, and when the wind blew, I should bow with stately dignity like the others."

So discontented was the tree that it took no pleasure in the sunshine, or the birds, or in the rosy clouds that floated over it morning and evening.

Sometimes in winter, when the snow lay white and sparkling on the ground, a hare

would come leaping along and jump right over the little tree's head; then how mortified it felt!

Two winters passed; and when the third came, the tree had grown so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it.

"Ah, to grow and grow! to become tall and old! That is the only thing in the world worth caring for," the fir tree sighed.

In the autumn the woodcutters always came and cut down several of the tallest trees, and the young fir, which had now grown to a very good height, shuddered as the noble trees fell to the ground with a crash. After the branches were lopped off, the trunks looked so slender and bare that they could scarcely be recognized. Then the trees were placed, one upon another, on wagons, and dragged by horses out of the forest. "Where were they going? What was going to become of them?" The young fir tree wondered a great deal about it.

So in the spring, when the swallows and the storks came, it asked them: "Do you

know where those trees were taken? Did you meet them?"

The swallows knew nothing of them, but the stork, after a little reflection, nodded his head and said: "Yes, I think I know. As I flew from Egypt I met several new ships, and they had fine masts that smelt like fir. These must have been the trees, and I assure you they were most stately and grand; they towered majestically."

"Oh, how I wish I were tall enough to go on the sea!" said the fir tree. "Tell me, what is this sea, and what does it look like?"

"It would take too much time to explain, —a great deal too much," said the stork, flying quickly away.

"Rejoice in thy youth," said the sunbeam; "rejoice in the fresh growing time, and in the young life that is within thee!"

And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew wept tears over it; but the fir tree did not understand.

Christmas time drew near, and many young trees were cut down; some that were even

smaller and younger than the fir tree, which had no peace or rest from its longing to leave the forest. These young trees, which were chosen for their beauty, kept their branches, but were also laid on wagons and drawn by horses out of the forest.

“Where are they going?” asked the fir tree. “They are not taller than I am; indeed, one was not so tall. And why do they keep all their branches? Where are they going?”

“We know! we know!” sang the sparrows. “We have looked in at the windows of the houses in the town, and we know what is done with them. Oh, you cannot think what honor and glory they receive! They are dressed up in the most splendid manner. We have looked in and seen them standing in the middle of a warm room, adorned with all sorts of beautiful things,—gilded apples, sweetmeats, playthings, and hundreds of candles.”

“And then,” asked the fir tree, trembling in all its branches, “and then what happens?”

“We did not see any more,” said the sparrows; “but, indeed, it was simply wonderful!”

“I wonder whether anything so brilliant will ever happen to me,” thought the fir tree. “That would be even better than sailing over the sea. Oh, when will Christmas be here! I am now as tall and well grown as those which were taken away last year. O that I were now laid on the wagon, or standing in the warm room with all that brightness and splendor about me! Something better and more beautiful is sure to follow, or the trees would not be so decked out. Yes, something better, something still more splendid must follow — but what can it be? I am weary with longing. I scarcely know myself what is the matter with me.”

“Rejoice in our love,” said the air and the sunlight; “rejoice in thine own bright life in the fresh air.”

But the tree would not rejoice, though it grew taller every day; and, winter and summer, its evergreen foliage might be seen in

the forest, and passers-by would say, "What a beautiful tree!"

A short time before the next Christmas the discontented fir tree was the first to fall. As the ax cut sharply into its trunk, deep in through the pith, the tree fell to the ground with a groan, conscious only of pain and faintness, and forgetting all its dreams of happiness in the sorrow of leaving its home in the forest. It knew that it would never again see its dear old companions the trees, nor the little bushes, nor the flowers that had grown by its side — perhaps not even the birds.

Nor was the journey at all pleasant. The tree first recovered itself while it was being unloaded, with several other trees, in the courtyard of a house; and it heard a man say: "We want only one, and this is the prettiest. This one is beautiful!"

Then came two servants in grand livery, and carried the fir tree into a large and beautiful room. Pictures hung on the walls, and near the large stove stood great china

jars with lions on the lids. There were rocking-chairs, silken sofas, large tables with picture books and toys that had cost a hundred times a hundred dollars,—at least, so the children said.

Then the fir tree was placed in a great tub full of sand, but no one could see that it was



a tub, for it was hung with green cloth, and it stood on a very handsome carpet. Oh, how the tree trembled! What was going to happen to it now? Some young ladies came, and the servants helped them to adorn the tree.

On some branches they hung little bags cut out of colored paper, and each bag was full of sweetmeats; from other branches there

hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there; and above and all around were hundreds of red, blue, and white candles, which were fastened upon the branches. Dolls, exactly like real men and women, were placed under the green leaves, — the fir tree had never seen any before, — and at the very top was fastened a glittering star, made of gold tinsel. Oh, it was very beautiful!

“This evening,” they all exclaimed, “this evening how bright it will be!”

“O that evening were come,” thought the tree, “and the candles were lighted! Then I shall know what else is going to happen. Will the trees come from the forest to see me? Will the sparrows peep in at the windows, I wonder? Shall I grow faster here, and keep on all these ornaments during summer and winter?”

But guessing was of very little use. Its back ached with trying; and this pain is as bad for a slender tree as headache is for us.

At last the candles were lighted, and then what a shining blaze of splendor the tree



presented! It trembled so with joy in all its branches that one of the candles fell on a green twig and set fire to it. "Help! help!" exclaimed the young ladies, and they quickly extinguished the fire.

After this the tree did not dare even to tremble (though the fire frightened it), it was so anxious not to hurt any of the beautiful ornaments which so dazzled and bewildered it by their brilliance.

And now the folding doors were thrown open, and a troop of children rushed in as if they intended to upset the tree. They were followed more slowly by the older people. For a moment the little ones stood silent with delight, and then they shouted for joy till the room rang; and they danced merrily round the tree, and snatched off one present after another.

"What are they doing?" thought the tree.
"What will happen next?"

The candles burned down to the branches and were put out one by one. Then the children were given permission to plunder the tree.

Oh, how they rushed upon it! Its branches creaked with the strain, and if it had not been fastened by the gold star to the ceiling, it must have been thrown down.

Then the children danced about with their pretty toys, and no one paid any attention to the tree except the old nurse, who came and peeped among the branches to see if an apple or a fig had been forgotten.

“A story! a story!” cried the children, and dragged a little stout man toward the tree.

“Now we are in the greenwood,” said the man, as he sat down beneath it, “and the tree will have the pleasure of hearing, too. But I am going to tell only one story. What shall it be? Henny Penny? or Humpty Dumpty, who fell downstairs, but soon got up again, and at last married a princess?”

“Henny Penny!” cried some. “Humpty Dumpty!” cried others; and there was a great uproar. But the fir tree kept silent and thought: “What am I supposed to do now? Have I nothing to do with all this?”

But it had already been in the entertainment, and had played out its part.

Then the old man told the story of Humpty Dumpty, — how he fell downstairs, but soon got up again, and married a princess. And the children clapped their hands and cried, “Another! another!” for they wanted to hear the story of Henny Penny too; but this time they got only Humpty Dumpty. The fir tree stood quiet and thoughtful. The birds in the forest had never told anything like that, — how Humpty Dumpty fell downstairs, and yet married a princess.

“Ah, yes, that is the way it happens in the world, I suppose,” thought the fir tree. And it believed the story because such a nice man had told it.

“Well,” it thought, “who knows? Perhaps I shall fall downstairs, too, and marry a princess”; and it looked forward eagerly to the next evening, expecting to be again decked out with candles and toys, tinsel and fruit. “To-morrow I will not tremble,” thought the tree; “I will enjoy to the full

all my splendor, and I shall hear the story of Humpty Dumpty again, and perhaps Henny Penny too." And the tree stood silent and lost in thought all night.

In the morning the servants came in. "Now," thought the tree, "all the decking me out will begin again." But they dragged it out of the room and upstairs to the garret, and threw it on the floor in a dark corner where no daylight shone, and there they left it. "What does this mean?" thought the tree. "What am I to do here? What is there for me to hear in a place like this?" and it leaned against the wall, and thought and thought.

And it had time enough to think, for days and nights passed and no one came near it; and when at last some one did come, it was only to put some great boxes into a corner. So the tree was completely hidden from sight; it seemed as if it had been quite forgotten.

"It is winter now out of doors," thought the tree. "The ground is hard and covered

with snow, so that people cannot plant me yet. That is doubtless why I am left here under cover till the spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me! Still, I wish it were not so dark here, and so terribly lonely, with not even a little hare to look at. How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the hare would run by—yes, and jump over me, too; but I did not like it at all then. Oh, it is terribly lonely here!”

“Squeak, squeak!” said a little mouse, stealing out of his hole and creeping cautiously toward the tree; then came another, and they both sniffed at the fir tree, and crept in and out between its branches.

“Oh, it is very cold!” said the little mouse. “If it were not, we should be very comfortable here, should n’t we, old fir tree?”

“I am not old at all,” said the fir tree. “There are many who are much older than I am.”

“Where do you come from?” asked the mice, who were full of curiosity; “and what do you know? What is the most beautiful

place on earth that you know about? Do tell us all about it! Have you been in the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelves, and hams hang from the ceiling? One can run about on tallow candles there. Ah! that is the place where one goes in thin and comes out fat."

"I know nothing about that," said the fir tree; "but I know of the wood, where the sun shines and the birds sing."

And then the tree told the little mice all about its youth. The mice had never heard anything like that before, and they listened with all their ears, and said: "How much you have seen! How happy you must have been!"

"Happy!" exclaimed the fir tree; and then, as it thought over what it had been telling them, it added, "Ah, yes, those were happy days."

But when it went on and told them about Christmas Eve, and how it had been adorned with sweetmeats and candles, the mice repeated once more, "How happy, how very fortunate you have been, you old fir tree!"

“I am not old at all,” replied the tree. “I only came from the forest this winter. I am now checked in my growth.”

“What splendid stories you do know!” said the little mice. And the next night they came with four others, to have them hear what the tree had to tell. The more it talked, the more it remembered, and then it thought to itself: “Yes, those were happy days, but they may come again. Humpty Dumpty fell downstairs, and yet he married the princess. Perhaps I, too, may marry a princess.” And the tree thought of a pretty little birch tree that grew in the forest; she was a princess, a real princess, to the fir tree.

“Who is Humpty Dumpty?” asked the little mice. And then the tree told the whole story; it could remember every single word. And the little mice were so delighted with it that they were ready to jump with joy up to the very top of the tree. The next night a great many more mice made their appearance, and on Sunday two rats came; but they did not care about the story at all, and

that troubled the mice, for it made them also think less of it.

“Is that the only story you know?” asked the rats.

“The only one,” answered the tree. “I heard it on the happiest evening of my life; but I did not know I was so happy at the time.”

“We think it is a very poor story,” said the rats. “Don’t you know any story about bacon or tallow candles in the storeroom?”

“No,” replied the tree.

“Then we are much obliged to you,” said the rats, and they went their way.

The little mice also kept away after this, and the tree sighed and said, “Really, it was very pleasant when the lively little mice sat around me and listened, while I told them stories. Now that is all past, too. However, I shall consider myself happy when some one comes to take me out of this place.”

But would this ever happen? Yes; one morning people came to clear up the garret; the boxes were moved aside and the tree was

pulled out of the corner and thrown roughly on the floor; then the servants dragged it out to the stairs, where the daylight shone.

“Now life is beginning again,” thought the tree, rejoicing in the sunshine and fresh air.

It was carried downstairs and out into the yard so quickly that it forgot to look at itself, and gazed about it, for there was so much to be seen.

The yard opened into a garden where everything was blooming. Fresh and sweet roses hung over a little trellis; the linden trees were in blossom; and swallows flew here and there, calling, “Twit, twit, twit, my mate is coming”; but it was not the fir tree they meant.

“Now I shall live,” thought the tree joyfully, stretching out its branches; but alas! they were all withered and yellow, and it was lying in a corner among weeds and nettles.

The star of gold paper still stuck in the top of the tree and glittered in the sunshine.

In the yard two of the merry children who had danced round the tree at Christmas were playing. One of them saw the gilded star, and ran up and tore it off.

“See what is sticking to the ugly old fir tree,” he cried, and stamped on the boughs till they crackled under his boots.

And the tree saw all the fresh, bright flowers in the garden, and looked at itself, and wished it had been left lying in the dark corner of the garret. It thought of its fresh youth in the forest, of the merry Christmas Eve, and of the little mice that had listened so happily to the tale of Humpty Dumpty.

“Past! past!” said the poor tree. “O had I only enjoyed myself while I could! But now it is too late,—it is all past.”

Then a lad came and chopped the tree into small pieces, till a large pile lay heaped on the ground. The pieces were placed in a fire, where they blazed up brightly, and the tree sighed so deeply that each sigh was like a pistol shot. Then the children who were at play came and sat in front of the fire and

looked at it, and cried, “Piff! puff! bang!” But at each “bang,” which was a deep sigh, the tree was thinking of a summer day in the forest, or of some winter night out there, when the stars were shining brightly, or of Christmas Eve, or of Humpty Dumpty, the only story it had ever heard or could tell, — till at last the tree burned away.

The children played on in the garden, and the youngest wore on his breast the golden star which the tree had worn on the happiest evening of its life. Now that was past, — all was past; the tree’s life was past, and this story, too, is past, for all stories must come to an end some time or other.



PLEIADES, OR THE SEVEN STARS

THERE was once a man who had six sons. He did not give them names like other people, but only called them according to their ages, — Eldest, Next-Eldest, Third-Eldest, Third-Youngest, Next-Youngest, and Youngest. They had no other names.

When Eldest was eighteen, and Youngest twelve, their father told them that they must all go out into the world, and each must learn a trade.

They set out together, but when they came to a place where there were six roads, all leading different ways, they agreed to part company, and each chose a road. But they promised one another that just two years from that day they would meet there again, and go home together to their father.

On the appointed day they met, and went home together. Their father questioned each

of them as to what trade he had learned. Eldest said he had learned to be a ship-builder; he could build ships that went of themselves. Next-Eldest had been to sea; he was a helmsman, and could steer a ship as easily on the land as on the sea. Third-Eldest had only learned the art of listening, but now he could hear in one country what was going on in another. Third-Youngest had learned to shoot, and he had become a crack shot. Next-Youngest had learned to climb; he could go up and down a wall like a fly,—there was nothing too steep for him.

Now when their father had listened to what these five had to tell about what they could do, he said that although upon the whole they had done fairly well, yet he had expected something more of them. What they had learned to do most people could do also. Now he must hear what Youngest could do.

Youngest had always been his darling, and in him he had the greatest confidence. Youngest was delighted that at last it was

his turn to speak, and said in the most cheerful manner that he had become a master thief. When his father heard that, he was so angry that he gave Youngest a sound box on the ear, saying, "Fie! for shame! You are a disgrace to me and to all your family."

Now it so happened that just at this very time the King's fair young daughter had been stolen away by a dwarf, and the King had promised that whoever should find her and deliver her from the dwarf's power should have her for his wife, and half the kingdom with her as her marriage portion.

The six brothers determined to try their luck. The shipbuilder built a ship that would go of itself. Then they all went on board, and the helmsman steered the ship over the land and over the sea. The listener kept on listening all the time, and at last he could hear the Princess inside a glass mountain. So they sailed up to the glass mountain.

The climber climbed immediately to the top, and looking down he saw the dwarf lying

asleep with his ugly head on the Princess's lap. Then he ran down again, took the little master thief on his back, and climbed right down inside the mountain with him. The master thief stole away the Princess without waking the dwarf, and the climber helped them both back to the ship. They got on board and sailed away.

The listener kept a strict watch on the dwarf all the time, and when they had gone some little way he called to the others, "Now the dwarf is waking; now he is stretching himself; now he misses the Princess; and now he is coming!"

The Princess was dreadfully frightened, and said it was all over with them now, unless they had some one on board who was a crack shot. The dwarf could fly through the air, so that he would overtake them directly; but he was shot-proof, except in one little black spot about the size of a pin's head, which was just in the middle of his chest.

Then came the dwarf, whirling and rushing through the air. But the marksman was

ready for him; he took aim and hit him right in the center of the little black spot. Instantly the dwarf fell into the water dead.

So the six brothers came sailing home with the Princess, and took her to her father's palace. They were all in love with her, and each one of them could say with truth that *without him* she could not have been set free. The King was in a great strait. He could not tell to which of the brothers he ought to give his daughter, and the Princess herself was greatly troubled, for she did not know which one of them she liked best.

But now it did not please the good God that there should be any quarreling amongst them; so he made all six brothers and the Princess die on the selfsame night, and he turned them all seven into stars, and fixed them in the sky. And now people call them Pleiades, or the Seven Stars. And the star that shines brightest of all the seven is the Princess, but the palest is the master thief.

BLUEBEARD

ONCE upon a time there was a man who was very rich. He had fine houses, both in town and in the country; in them he had a great deal of gold and silver plate; his furniture was richly embroidered and his coaches were all gilded over. But this man had the misfortune to have a blue beard, which made him so ugly and terrible that there was not a woman nor a girl who did not shun and avoid him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of quality, had two daughters who were perfect beauties. He asked her for one of them in marriage, leaving to her the choice of which she would bestow on him. They would neither of them have him, but sent him backwards and forwards from one to the other, for neither could make up her mind to marry a man who had a blue beard. Another thing which made them object to him was that he had been

married several times already, and nobody knew what had ever become of his wives.

As Bluebeard was very anxious to become better acquainted with them, he took them, with their mother and three or four of their best friends, and some other young people of the neighborhood, to one of his country seats, where they spent a week. The whole time was given up to pleasure parties, — to excursions, to hunting and fishing, to dancing, banqueting, and feasting. No one even thought of going to bed, but the nights were passed in merrymaking of all kinds. In short, all went off so well that the younger daughter began to think that the beard of the master of the house was not so very blue, after all, and that he was a very civil gentleman. So as soon as they returned home the marriage was concluded.

About a month afterward Bluebeard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey into the country, for six weeks at least, upon business of importance. He desired her to amuse herself and have a good time in his

absence, to send for her friends, to take them into the country if she wished, and to live bountifully wherever she was.

“Here,” he said, “are the keys of the two great storerooms for furniture; these smaller ones are for the chests which contain my silver and gold plate which is not in everyday use; these open my strong boxes which hold my money, both gold and silver; these, my caskets of jewels; and this is the master key to all the rooms. But this little one here is the key of the closet at the end of the great gallery on the ground floor. Open them all; go everywhere else; but into this little closet I forbid you to enter, and I forbid you so strictly that if you do open it, there is nothing you may not expect from my anger.”

She promised to obey all his orders exactly; and Bluebeard, after having embraced her, got into his coach and set out on his journey.

The neighbors and friends of the young wife did not wait to be sent for, so eager were they to see all the riches of her house; for they had not dared to come while her

husband was there because of his blue beard, which frightened them. As soon as they were inside the house they ran about from room to room, and even through all the closets and wardrobes, saying that each one seemed finer and richer than the last. They went up into the storerooms, where they could not say enough in admiration of the number and beauty of the tapestry, beds, couches, cabinets, stands, tables, and looking-glasses in which you might see yourself from head to foot.

Some of these mirrors were framed with glass, others with silver, plain and gilded; they were the most beautiful and most magnificent ever seen.

The visitors never stopped admiring and envying the happiness of their friend, who meanwhile was not at all entertained in looking at all these rich things because of her impatience to go and open the closet on the ground floor. She was so beside herself with curiosity that, without once thinking that it was rude to leave her guests, she

slipped away down a little back staircase with such excessive haste that two or three times she came near falling and breaking her neck. When she reached the closet door she stood still for some moments, thinking of her husband's orders and considering how unhappiness might come upon her if she were disobedient; but the temptation was so strong that she could not overcome it. She took the little key and, trembling, opened the door.

At first she could not see anything because the windows were shut. After some moments she began to see that there was blood on the floor, and that the bodies of several dead women were lying there. (These were the wives whom Bluebeard had married and murdered one after another.) She thought she would surely die of fear, and the key, which she had pulled out of the lock, fell from her hand.

When she had recovered a little from the shock she picked up the key, locked the door, and went upstairs into her chamber to

compose herself; but she could not do it, for she was too much upset by her fright.

As she noticed that the key of the closet was stained with blood, she tried two or three times to wipe it off, but the stain remained. It did no good to wash it, or even to rub it with soap and sand. The stain was still there, for the key was a magic key, and she could never make it quite clean; when the stain was gone from one side, it came on the other.

Bluebeard returned from his journey that same evening, and said that he had received letters upon the road, which told him that the business on which he was called away had been settled to his advantage. His wife did all she could to convince him that she was overjoyed at his speedy return.

Next morning he asked her for the keys. She gave them to him, but with such a trembling hand that he easily guessed what had happened.

“How is it,” said he, “that the key of my closet is not here with the rest?”

“I must,” she said, “have left it upstairs on my table.”

“Do not fail,” said Bluebeard, “to bring it to me presently.”

After putting it off several times she was forced to bring him the key. Bluebeard examined it closely, and then said to his wife, “How comes this stain upon the key?”

“I do not know,” cried the poor woman, turning paler than death.

“You do not know!” replied Bluebeard. “Well, I know very well. You wanted to go into the closet, did you? Very well, madam; you shall go in and take your place among the ladies you saw there.”

She threw herself weeping at her husband’s feet, and begged his pardon with all the signs of true repentance for her disobedience. She would have melted a stone, so beautiful and sorrowful was she; but Bluebeard had a heart harder than any stone.

“You must die, madam,” said he, “and that at once.”



“Since I must die,” she answered, looking up at him through her tears, “give me a little time to say my prayers.”

“I give you,” replied Bluebeard, “half a quarter of an hour, but not one moment more.”

When she was alone she called her sister, and said: “Sister Anne,” — for that was her name, — “go up, I beg you, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not coming. They promised me they would come to-day; and if you see them, give them a sign to make haste.”

Her sister Anne went up to the top of the tower, and the poor wife cried out from time to time; “Anne, sister Anne, do you see no one coming?”

And sister Anne said, “I see nothing but the sun, which makes a dust, and the grass, which looks green.”

In the meantime Bluebeard, holding a great cutlass in his hand, cried out to his wife as loud as he could, “Come down quickly, or I shall come up to you.”

“One moment longer, if you please,” said his wife; and she cried out very softly, “Anne, sister Anne, do you see no one coming?”

And sister Anne answered, “I see nothing but the sun, which makes a dust, and the grass, which looks green.”

“Come down at once,” cried Bluebeard, “or I shall come up to you.”

“I am coming,” answered his wife; and she cried, “Anne, sister Anne, do you see no one coming?”

“I see,” replied sister Anne, “a great dust, that comes from this side.”

“Is it my brothers?”

“Alas, no, my sister! I see a flock of sheep.”

“Will you not come down?” cried Bluebeard.

“One moment longer,” said his wife; and then she cried out, “Anne, sister Anne, do you see no one coming?”

“I see,” she said, “two horsemen coming, but they are yet a great way off.”

“God be praised,” replied the poor wife joyfully; “they are my brothers. I will make them a sign, as well as I can, for them to make haste.”

Then Bluebeard bawled out so loud that he made the whole house tremble. The poor wife came down and threw herself at his feet, all in tears, with her hair about her shoulders.

“All this does not help you,” said Bluebeard; “you must die.” Then, taking hold of her hair with one hand, and raising his cutlass with the other, he was going to strike off her head. The poor lady, turning toward him and looking at him with dying eyes, begged him to give her one little moment to collect her thoughts.

“No, no,” said he, “commend thyself to God,” and again lifting his arm . . .

At this moment there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Bluebeard stopped suddenly. The gate was opened and presently two horsemen entered, who with their swords in their hands ran straight to Bluebeard. He saw they were his wife’s brothers,

one a dragoon, the other a musketeer. He fled immediately to save himself, but the two brothers pursued so closely that they overtook him before he could gain the steps of the porch. There they ran their swords through his body, and left him dead. The poor wife was so overcome that she had not strength to rise and welcome her brothers.

Bluebeard had no heirs, and so his wife became mistress of all his estate. She made use of one portion of it to marry her sister Anne to a young gentleman who had loved her for a long while; another portion to buy captains' commissions for her brothers; and the rest to marry herself to a very worthy gentleman who made her forget the distressing time she had passed with Bluebeard.

THUMBELINA

THERE was once a woman who wished so very much to have a little child that she went to a fairy and said: "I should so very much like to have a little child. Can you tell me where I can get one?"

"Oh, that can be easily managed," said the fairy. "Here is a barleycorn; it is not of the same kind as those which grow in the farmers' fields, and which the chickens eat. Put it in a flowerpot, and see what will happen."

"Thank you, thank you," said the woman; and she gave the fairy twelve shillings, which was the price of the barleycorn. Then she went home, and immediately there grew up a large, handsome flower, which looked like a tulip, except that its leaves were tightly closed as if it were still a bud.

"What a beautiful flower!" exclaimed the woman, and she kissed the red and yellow

leaves; and as she kissed them the flower opened. It was a real tulip, but within the flower, upon the green velvety stamens, sat a very delicate and graceful tiny maiden. She was scarcely half as long as a thumb,

so they called her Thumbelina.

A walnut shell, elegantly polished, served her for a cradle, blue violet petals were her mattress, and a rose leaf her counterpane.

Here she slept at night, but in the daytime she

played upon the table, where the woman had put a bowl full of water. Round this bowl was a wreath of flowers with their stems in the water, and upon it floated a large tulip leaf, which served the little one for a boat. Here she sat and rowed herself from side to



side with two white horsehairs for oars. It was a very pretty sight. Thumbelina could sing, too, so sweetly and softly that nothing like it had ever before been heard.

One night while she lay in her pretty bed, a large, ugly, wet toad crept through a broken pane of glass in the window, and hopped down on the table where Thumbelina lay sleeping under the rose-leaf quilt.

“What a pretty little wife this would make for my son,” said the toad; and she took up the walnut shell in which Thumbelina lay asleep, and jumped through the window with it into the garden.

On the marshy bank of a broad stream in the garden lived the toad with her son. He was as ugly as his mother; and when he saw the lovely little maiden in the walnut shell, all he could say was, “Croak, croak, croak!”

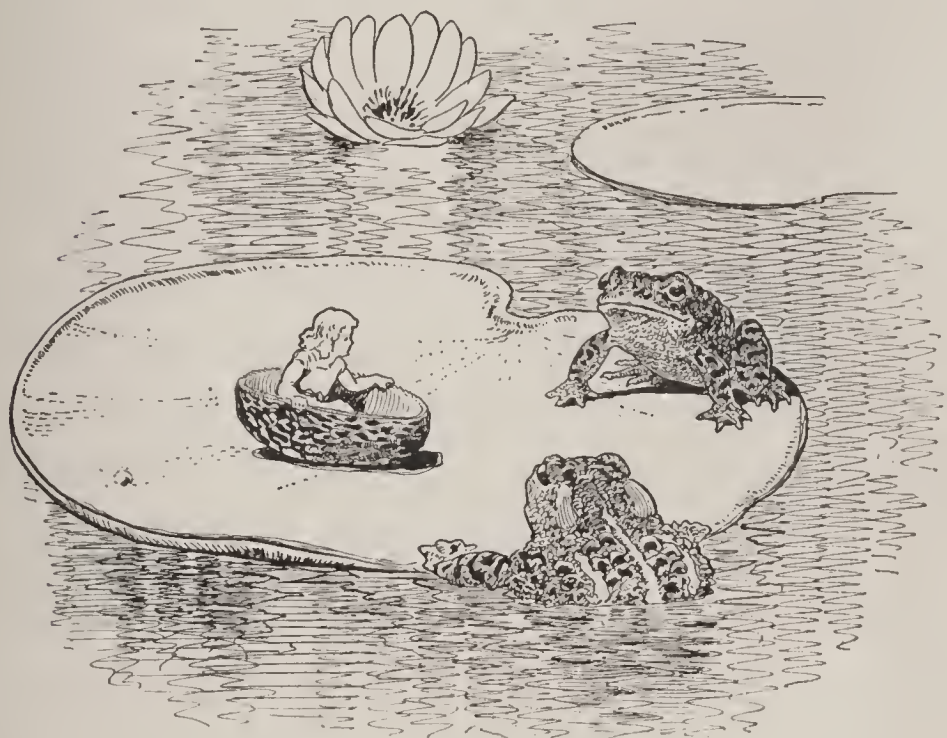
“Don’t speak so loud, or you will wake her,” said the old toad; “and then she might run away, for she is light as swan’s-down. We will take her out in the stream and put her on one of the water-lily leaves; it will

be like an island to her, she is so light and small. Then she can't run away from us while we are preparing the apartments under the marsh, in which you are to live when you are married."

Far out in the stream grew a number of water lilies, with broad green leaves which looked as if they were floating on the top of the water. The leaf that was farthest away was also the largest, and to this the old toad swam with the walnut shell in which Thumbelina lay still asleep. The tiny maiden woke very early in the morning, and began to cry bitterly when she saw where she was, for she could see nothing but water on every side of the large green leaf, and there was no way of reaching land.

Meanwhile the old toad was very busy down under the marsh, decking her room with rushes and yellow wild flowers to make it look pretty for her new daughter-in-law. Then she swam out with her ugly son to the leaf on which she had placed Thumbelina. She wanted to get the pretty bed that

she might put it in the bridal chamber before Thumbelina herself came there. The old toad bowed low in the water and said, "Here is my son; he will be your husband,



and you will live happily together in the marsh by the stream."

"Croak, croak, croak!" was all the son could say for himself.

Then the toad took up the delicate little bed and swam away with it, leaving Thumbelina all alone on the green leaf, where she sat and wept. She could not bear to think

of living with the old toad and having her ugly son for a husband.

The little fishes who swam about in the water beneath had seen the toad and heard what she said; so now they lifted their heads above the water to look at the little maiden. As soon as they caught sight of her and saw how very pretty she was, they felt sorry that she must go to live with the ugly toads.

“No, that must never be!” they said to one another. So they crowded together in the water round the green stalk which held the leaf on which the little maiden stood, and gnawed it away at the root with their teeth. The leaf floated down the stream, carrying Thumbelina far away out of the reach of the toad.

Thumbelina sailed past many towns, and the little birds in the bushes saw her and sang, “What a lovely little creature!” So the leaf floated farther and farther away with her till it brought her to other lands.

A pretty little white butterfly fluttered round her for a long time and at last

alighted on the leaf. The maiden pleased him, and she was glad she did, for she was lonely. Taking off her girdle she tied one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end to the leaf, which was now gliding on much faster than before.

Presently a large cockchafer flew by. The moment he caught sight of Thumbelina he seized her round her slender waist with his claws and flew with her to a tree. The green leaf floated away down the stream, and the butterfly with it, for he was fastened to the leaf and could not get away.

Oh, how frightened Thumbelina was when the cockchafer flew with her to the tree! But especially was she distressed for the beautiful white butterfly which she had fastened to the leaf, for if he could not free himself he would die of hunger. But the cockchafer did not trouble himself at all about that; he seated himself beside her on a large green leaf, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and told her she was very pretty, though not in the least like a cockchafer.

Before long all the cockchafers who lived in the tree came to pay Thumbelina a visit. They stared at her, and then the young lady cockchafers turned up their feelers and said, "Why, she has only two legs! How very ugly!"

"She has no feelers," said one.

"Her waist is quite slim. Pooh! she is like a human being," said another.

"How ugly she is!" said all the lady cockchafers.

Then the cockchafer who had run away with her began to wonder why he had thought her so pretty, and to believe that she was as ugly as the others said. He would have nothing more to say to her, but told her she might go where she liked. Then he flew down with her from the tree and placed her on a daisy. There she sat and wept at the thought that she was so ugly that the cockchafers would have nothing to do with her. And all the while she was really the loveliest little being that one could imagine, and as tender and delicate as a beautiful rose leaf.

During the whole summer poor little Thumbelina lived quite alone in the wide forest. She wove herself a bed with blades of grass, and hung it under a broad leaf to protect herself from the rain. She sucked honey from the flowers for food, and drank the dew from the leaves every morning.

So passed away the summer and the autumn, and then came the winter, — the long cold winter. All the birds who had sung to her so sweetly had flown away, and the trees and flowers had withered. The large shamrock under the shelter of which she had lived shriveled up, leaving nothing but a yellow, withered stalk. She was dreadfully cold, for her clothes were thin and torn, and she was herself so frail and delicate that she nearly froze to death. It began to snow, too, and the snowflakes as they fell upon her were like a whole shovelful falling upon one of us, for we are tall, but she was only an inch high. She wrapped herself in a dry leaf, but it cracked in the middle and gave her no warmth, and she shivered with cold.

Close to the wood in which she was living was a large cornfield, but the corn had been cut a long time; nothing remained but the bare, dry stubble, standing up out of the frozen ground. It was to her like wandering about in a large wood. Oh, how she shivered



with cold! All at once she came to the door of a field mouse who had a little den under the corn stubble. There lived the field mouse in warmth and comfort, with a store-room full of corn and a splendid kitchen and dining room. Poor Thumbelina stood before the door just like a little beggar girl, and asked for a little piece of barleycorn,

for she had been without a morsel to eat for two days.

“You poor little creature,” said the field mouse, for she was a good, kind-hearted old mouse; “come into my warm room and dine with me.”

Then she was pleased with Thumbelina; so she said, “You are quite welcome to stay with me all winter if you like; but you must keep my room clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I like very much to hear them.”

And Thumbelina did all that the field mouse asked her, and found herself very comfortable.

“To-night I expect a visitor,” said the field mouse one day. “My neighbor pays me a visit once a week. He is better off than I am; he has large rooms, and wears a beautiful black velvet coat. If you could only have him for a husband, you would be well provided for indeed. But he is blind. You must tell him some of your prettiest stories.”

Thumbelina had no interest in this neighbor, for he was a mole. However, he came

and paid them a visit, dressed in his black velvet coat.

“He is very rich and learned,” the field mouse told her, “and his house is twenty times as large as mine.”

He was rich and learned, no doubt, but he always spoke slightly of the sun and the pretty flowers because he had never seen them. Thumbelina had to sing to him, “Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home,” and many other pretty songs. And the mole fell in love with her because she had so sweet a voice; but he said nothing yet, for he was very prudent and cautious. A short time before, the mole had dug a long passage under the earth, which led from his house to that of the field mouse, and here he gave the field mouse and Thumbelina permission to walk whenever they liked. But he warned them not to be alarmed at the sight of a dead bird that lay in the passage. It was a perfect bird with a beak and feathers and could not have been dead long. It was lying just where the mole had made his passage.

The mole took in his mouth a piece of decaying wood, for that will often glow in the dark like fire, and went before them, lighting them through the long, dark passage. When they came to the spot where the dead bird lay, the mole pushed his broad nose through the ceiling, so that the earth gave way and daylight shone into the passage.

In the middle of the path lay a swallow, his pretty wings pressed close to his sides, his feet and head drawn up under his feathers; the poor bird had evidently died of cold. It made little Thumbelina very sad to see it, for she did so love the birds; all through the summer they had sung and twittered for her so beautifully. But the mole pushed it aside with his crooked legs and said: "Now he can't sing any more! How miserable it must be to be born a little bird! I am thankful that none of my children will ever be birds, for they can do nothing but cry 'Tweet, tweet,' and must always die of hunger in the winter."

“Yes, you speak like a sensible man!” exclaimed the field mouse. “What is the use of his twittering if when winter comes he must either starve or be frozen to death? That may be high-bred, but it is certainly not pleasant.”

Thumbelina said nothing, but when the two others had turned their backs on the bird she stooped down and stroked aside the soft feathers which covered the head, and kissed the closed eyelids.

“Perhaps it was he who sang to me so sweetly in the summer,” she said. “How much pleasure it gave me, you dear, pretty bird!”

The mole stopped up the hole through which the daylight shone and escorted the ladies home. But Thumbelina could not sleep that night for thinking of the cold bird; so she got out of bed and wove a large, beautiful blanket of hay. She carried it out and spread it over the dead bird, and piled upon it thistledown which she had found in the field mouse’s room, so that he might lie warmly in the cold earth.

“Farewell, pretty bird!” she said; “farewell, and thank you for your beautiful songs in the summer, when all the trees were green and the sun shone down warmly upon us.”

Then she laid her head on the bird's breast, but she was startled, for it seemed as if something inside the bird went “thump, thump.” It was the bird's heart; for he was not really dead, only benumbed with the cold, and the warmth had restored him to life. In autumn all the swallows fly away to warmer countries; but if one happens to linger it becomes so stiff with cold that it drops down as if it were dead, and then the snow comes and covers it.

Thumbelina trembled very much; she was quite frightened, for the bird was large, a great deal larger than herself,—she was only an inch high. But she took courage, piled up the down more thickly over the poor swallow, and then took a leaf she had used for her own counterpane and laid it over his head.

The next night she stole out again to see him. He was alive but very weak; he could only open his eyes for a moment to look at Thumbelina, who stood by him with the piece of decayed wood in her hand, for she had no other lantern.

"Thank you, pretty little maiden," said the sick swallow; "I have been so beautifully warmed that soon I shall regain my strength and be able to fly about again in the warm sunshine."

"Oh, no!" said she; "it is very cold out of doors now; it snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed; I will take care of you."

She brought the swallow water in a flower leaf; and after he had drunk, he told her that he had torn one of his wings on a thorn bush and could not fly as fast as the others, who had flown far away to warm countries. At last he had fallen to the ground and could remember nothing more, nor how he came to be where she had found him.

All winter the swallow remained underground, and Thumbelina nursed and cared

for him tenderly. Neither the mole nor the field mouse knew anything about it, for they could not bear swallows.

Very soon the springtime came, and the sun warmed the earth. Then the swallow bade farewell to Thumbelina and opened the hole in the roof which the mole had made. The sun shone in upon them so beautifully that the swallow asked her if she would go with him. She could sit on his back, he said, and he would fly away with her into the green woods. But she knew it would grieve the field mouse if she left her in that manner, so she said, "No, I cannot."

"Farewell then, farewell, you good, pretty little maiden," said the swallow; and he flew out into the sunshine.

Thumbelina looked after him, and the tears rose in her eyes. She was very fond of the swallow.

"Tweet, tweet," sang the bird as he flew out into the green woods, and Thumbelina felt very sad. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn

which had been sown in the field over the house of the field mouse had grown up high in the air, and made a thick forest for Thumbelina, who was only an inch high.

“You are going to be married, little one,” said the field mouse. “My neighbor has asked for you. What good fortune for a poor child like you! Now we will set to work at your wedding clothes. You must have woolen and linen. Nothing must be wanting if you are to become the wife of the mole.”

Thumbelina had to turn the spindle, and the field mouse hired four spiders to weave for her day and night. Every evening the mole visited her and talked of the time when the summer would be over. Then he would set the wedding day for Thumbelina; but now the heat of the sun was so great that it burned the earth and made it hard like stone. Yes, as soon as the summer was over the wedding should take place. But Thumbelina was not at all pleased, for she did not like the tiresome mole.

Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she would steal out of the door, and when the wind blew the ears of corn aside so that she



could see the blue sky, she thought how beautiful and bright it seemed out there and wished so much to see her dear swallow again. But he never came; for by this time he had flown far away into the lovely green forest.

When autumn came Thumbelina had her outfit all ready, and the field mouse said to her, "In four weeks the wedding must take place."

But Thumbelina wept and said she would not marry the disagreeable mole.

"Nonsense," replied the field mouse. "Now don't be obstinate or I shall bite you with my white teeth. He is a very fine mole; the Queen herself has not such a beautiful velvet coat. His kitchens and cellars are quite full. You ought to be very thankful for such good fortune."

So the wedding day came, on which the mole was to take her away to live with him, deep under the earth, and never again to come out into the warm sunshine, because he did not like it. The poor child was very unhappy at the thought of saying farewell to the beautiful sun; she went to the door to look at it once more.

"Farewell, bright sun," she cried, stretching out her arms towards it; and then she walked a short distance from the house, for

the corn had been cut and only the dry stubble remained in the fields.

“Farewell, farewell,” she repeated, and threw her arms round a little red flower that grew just by her side. “Greet the little swallow for me if you should see him again.”

“Tweet, tweet,” sounded over her head suddenly. She looked up and there was the swallow flying close by. He was delighted to see Thumbelina. She told him how unwilling she was to marry the ugly mole and to live always deep under the earth where the sun never shone. And as she told him she wept.

“The cold winter is coming,” said the swallow, “and I am going to fly away into warmer countries. Will you go with me? You can sit on my back and fasten yourself on with your sash. Then we can fly away from the ugly mole and his dark rooms, — far away over the mountains into warmer countries, where the sun shines more brightly than here, where it is always summer, and there are beautiful flowers. Do come with

me, dear little Thumbelina; you saved my life when I lay frozen in that dark, dreary passage."

"Yes, I will go with you," said Thumbelina, and she seated herself on the bird's back with her feet on his outstretched wings, and bound her sash to one of his strongest feathers.

Up he flew into the air and far away, over forest and over sea, high above the highest mountains where the snow never melts. Thumbelina would have frozen in the cold air had she not crept under the bird's warm feathers, keeping only her little head out so that she might admire the beautiful things in the world beneath. At length they reached the warm countries, where the sun shines brightly and the sky seems so much higher above the earth. Here on hedges grew the finest green, purple, and white grapes; lemons and oranges hung from the trees in the woods; and the air was fragrant with myrtles and orange blossoms. Beautiful children ran along the roads playing

with gay butterflies. And as the swallow flew farther and farther south, everything became more and more beautiful.

At last they came to a blue lake, and by the side of it, shaded by magnificent trees, stood a palace of dazzling white marble,



built in olden times. Vines clustered round its lofty pillars, and at the top were many swallows' nests, and one of these was the home of the swallow who carried Thumbelina.

"That is my house," said the swallow, "but it would not do for you to live there; you would not be comfortable. Choose for

yourself one of those lovely flowers and I will put you down on it, and then you shall have everything you wish to make you happy."

"That will be delightful," she said, and clapped her little hands for joy.

On the ground lay a large marble pillar, which in falling had broken into three pieces. Between these fragments grew the most beautiful great white flowers. So the swallow flew down with Thumbelina and set her on one of the broad leaves. But how surprised he was to see, sitting in the middle of the flower, a tiny little man, as white and transparent as if he had been made of crystal! He had the prettiest gold crown on his head, and delicate wings at his shoulders, and was no bigger than Thumbelina. He was the fairy of the flower; for in every flower dwelt a tiny man or woman, and this was the King over them all.

"Oh, how beautiful he is!" whispered Thumbelina to the swallow.

The little Prince was very much frightened at the swallow, who was like a giant

compared to such a tiny little being as he; but when he saw Thumbelina he was delighted, for he thought her the prettiest little maiden he had ever seen. He took the gold crown from his head and placed it on hers, and asked her name, and if she would be his wife and Queen over all the flowers.

This was certainly a very different kind of husband from the son of the toad or the mole with his black velvet coat; so she said Yes to the handsome Prince. Then out of each flower came a little lady or a tiny lord, all so pretty that it was a pleasure to look at them. Each brought Thumbelina a present; but the best gift of all was a pair of beautiful white wings, which were fastened to her shoulders, and now she, too, could fly from flower to flower.

Then there was much rejoicing, and the swallow sat in his nest above and sang the wedding song as well as he could; but in his heart he felt sad, for he was very fond of Thumbelina and would have liked never to part with her.

"You must not be called Thumbelina any more," said the Prince to her; "for that is an ugly name, and you are so very lovely. We will call you Maia."

"Farewell, farewell," sang the swallow with a heavy heart as he left the warm countries to fly back again to Denmark. There he had a nest over the window of a man who wrote fairy tales. The swallow sang his "Tweet, tweet," and from his song we have the whole story.



CLEVER ALICE

THERE was once a man who had a daughter called Clever Alice. When she was grown up her father said, "We must get her married."

"Yes," said her mother; "if only some one would come who would have her."

At last a young man named Hans came from a distance and wooed her; but he made one condition, — that Clever Alice should be as clever as she was said to be.

"Oh," said her father, "she's sharp enough."

"Yes, indeed!" said her mother; "she can see the wind coming up the street, and hear the flies coughing."

"Very well," replied Hans; "but if she is not really clever, I won't have her."

When they were all sitting together at dinner the mother said, "Alice, go down into the cellar and draw some beer."



So Clever Alice took the jug from the nail on the wall, and went into the cellar, tapping the lid up and down as she went to pass away the time. When she reached the cellar she fetched a chair and put it in front of the cask so that she need not stoop and hurt her back. Then she held the jug in her hand and turned the tap. While the beer was running, as she did not wish to be idle, she let her eyes wander all over the wall, looking first this way and then that. All at once she saw just above her head a pickax, which the masons had accidentally left there.

Then Clever Alice began to cry, saying, "If I marry Hans, and we have a child, and he grows up, and we send him into the cellar here to draw beer, then the pickax will fall on his head and kill him."

So she sat and wept and cried with all her might over the misfortune which lay before her.

The people upstairs waited for the beer, but still Clever Alice did not come. At last her mother said to the maid, "Go down into

the cellar and see why Clever Alice is staying so long."

The maid went and found her sitting before the cask, crying bitterly.

"Alice, what are you crying about?" she asked.

"Alas!" she answered, "have I not reason to weep? If I marry Hans, and we have a child, and he grows up and has to draw beer here, perhaps that pickax will fall on his head and kill him."

Then the maid said, "What a clever Alice we have!" and she, too, sat down by Alice and began to weep over this misfortune.

After a while, as the maid did not come back and the people upstairs were getting very thirsty, the husband said to the boy, "Go down cellar and see what has become of Alice and the maid."

The boy went down, and there sat Alice and the maid weeping together. So he said, "What are you crying for?"

"Alas!" said Alice, "have I not reason to cry? If I marry Hans, and we have a child,

and he grows up and has to draw beer here, that pickax will fall on his head and kill him."

Then the boy said, "What a clever Alice we have!" and he sat down by Alice and began to howl lustily.

Upstairs they waited for the boy, but when he did not come the husband said, "Do go down cellar, wife, and see why Alice does not come back."

The wife went downstairs and found the three in the midst of their lamentations. She asked the reason, and Alice told her, also, how her future child, when it grew up and was sent to draw beer, would be killed by the pickax which would fall down. Then the mother likewise exclaimed, "What a clever Alice we have!" and sat down and wept with them.

The husband upstairs waited a short time, but at last, as his wife did not return and his thirst grew greater, he said, "I must go down into the cellar myself and see what has become of Alice."

But when he entered the cellar and found them all sitting there together crying, and heard the reason, how Alice's child was the cause of it all, because she might possibly have a child, who might be killed by the pickax, if he should happen to be sitting beneath it drawing beer just at the moment when the pickax fell down, then he, too, said, "What a clever Alice we have!" and sat down and wept with them.

The bridegroom waited upstairs alone for a long time; then, as nobody came, he said: "They must be waiting downstairs for me. I will go down and see what they are about." When he got downstairs there sat all five, weeping and lamenting in a heartrending way, each a little louder than the others.

"What misfortune can possibly have happened?" he asked.

"Alas! dear Hans," said Alice, "if we marry and have a child, and he grows up, and we happen to send him into the cellar here to draw beer, then that pickax which has been hanging up there might kill him

if it were to fall down upon his head; so have we not reason to weep?"

"Well," said Hans, "more cleverness than that is not needed to keep house for me; and as you are such a clever Alice I will have you for my wife." So he took her by the hand, led her upstairs with him, and married her.

When they had been married some time, Hans said, "Wife, I am going out to work and earn some money for us; do you go into the field and cut the corn, so that we may have some bread."

"Yes, my dear Hans, I will do so."

After Hans went away Alice cooked some nice broth for herself and took it into the field with her. When she got there she said to herself: "Now which shall I do? Shall I reap first, or eat first? I will eat first."

So she emptied her bowl of broth, and when she was satisfied she said again: "Now which shall I do? Shall I reap first, or sleep first? I will sleep first."

Then she lay down in the corn and fell asleep.

Meanwhile Hans had been at home some time, but Alice did not come.

“What a clever Alice she is!” said he; “she is so industrious that she does not even come home to eat.”

But as she still did not come, Hans went out to see how much she had reaped; but nothing was cut, and there lay Alice fast asleep in the corn. Hans hurried home and brought back a fowler’s net with little bells on it; this he hung about her, and still she did not wake. Then he ran home, shut the house door, and sat down to work.

At last, when it was quite dark, Clever Alice woke. When she stood up the net fell rattling about her, and the bells jingled at every step she took. This frightened her, and made her wonder whether she was really Clever Alice or not, and she said to herself, “Is it I, or is it not I?”

But she did not know how to answer, and stood for a long time in doubt. At last she thought, “I will go home and ask if it is I, or if it is not I; they will be sure to know.”

She ran to the door of her house, but it was locked. Then she knocked on the window, and cried, "Hans, is Alice at home?"

"Yes," answered Hans, "she is at home."

Then she was frightened and cried, "Alas! then it is not I," and she ran to the next door; but when the people heard the jingling of the bells they would not open for her, and she could get in nowhere. So she ran away out of the village, and no one has ever seen her since.



RIQUET WITH THE TUFT

THERE was once a queen who had a son so ugly and misshapen that it was questioned for a long time whether he was a human creature or not. A fairy who was present at his birth declared that he would be none the less amiable for all his ugliness, because he would have uncommon intelligence and wit. She added that he would have the power, by virtue of a gift which she had just bestowed upon him, to give the same talents which he possessed to the person whom he should love best. All this was some comfort to the poor Queen, who was in great distress at having such an unsightly child.

As soon as the child began to talk he said a thousand pretty things, and in everything he did he was so unusually clever that every one was delighted with him. I forgot to tell you that he was born with a little tuft of hair on his head, and on this account they

called him Riquet with the Tuft; for Riquet was the family name.

Seven or eight years after this the Queen of a neighboring kingdom had twin daughters. The firstborn was more beautiful than the day. The Queen was so very happy over this that it was feared that such excess of joy would do her harm. The same fairy who had been present at the birth of little Riquet with the Tuft was here too; and to moderate the Queen's joy she told her that this little Princess should have no sense at all, but should be as stupid as she was pretty. This mortified the Queen very much, but soon she had a still greater sorrow, for the second daughter was extremely ugly.

"Do not afflict yourself so much, madam," said the fairy. "Your daughter shall have it made up to her in other ways; she shall have so much intelligence and wit that her want of beauty will hardly be noticed."

"God grant it may be so," replied the Queen; "but is there no way to make the elder, who is so pretty, have a little sense?"

“I can do nothing for her in the matter of sense,” said the fairy, “but everything in the matter of beauty; and therefore, as there is nothing I would not do for your satisfaction, I will bestow on her as a gift the power to make handsome the person whom she likes best.”

As the two Princesses grew older, their perfections grew with them. Everywhere people talked of the beauty of the elder and of the wit of the younger. It is true that their defects increased considerably with their years. The younger grew visibly uglier, and the elder became more stupid every day; either she made no reply to what was asked her, or she said something very silly. She was, besides, so clumsy that she could not place four pieces of china on the mantelpiece without breaking one, nor drink a glass of water without spilling half of it on her clothes.

Although beauty is a great advantage to a young girl, in society the younger sister was almost always preferred to the elder. People would go first to the more beautiful

to see and admire her; but they very soon left her for the more clever sister, to enjoy listening to her pleasant conversation; and it was amazing to see how in less than a quarter of an hour the elder was without a person near her, while the whole company was crowding about the younger. The elder, dull as she was, noticed this very plainly, and would have given, without a moment of regret, all her beauty to have half the wit of her sister. The Queen, for all her good sense, could not help reproaching her often for her stupidity; this made the poor Princess ready to die of grief.

One day, when she had withdrawn to a wood near by to lament her misfortune, she saw coming towards her an ugly little man, very unpleasant to look at, but most magnificently dressed. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who had fallen in love with her from her portraits, which were scattered everywhere, and had now left his father's kingdom to have the pleasure of seeing her and talking with her. He was charmed at



finding her thus alone, and addressed her with all imaginable respect and politeness. Having observed, after he had paid her all the usual compliments, that she seemed very melancholy, he said to her, "I cannot understand, madam, how a person as beautiful as you are can be also as sorrowful as you appear to be; for although I can boast of having seen a great number of beautiful ladies, I declare to you that I never saw any one whose beauty approaches yours."

"You are very kind to say so, sir," answered the Princess; and here she stopped.

"Beauty," replied Riquet with the Tuft, "is so great an advantage that it ought to make up for all else; and when any one possesses it, I do not see that there is anything that can afflict her very much."

"I would much rather," said the Princess, "be as ugly as you are and have sense, than have the beauty which I possess, and be as stupid as I am."

"There is nothing, madam, which shows more plainly that we have sense than to

believe we have none; and it is the nature of that gift that the more people have it, the more they believe they lack it."

"I do not know how that may be," said the Princess, "but I know very well that I am extremely stupid, and that is the cause of my grief."

"If that is all which troubles you, madam, I can very easily put an end to your sorrow."

"And how will you do that?" said the Princess.

"I have the power, madam," said Riquet with the Tuft, "of giving to that person whom it is my fortune to love best as much wit as it is possible to have; and as you, madam, are that person, it will only depend on yourself if you have not as much wit as any one can have, provided only you are pleased to marry me."

The Princess was much confused and did not speak a word.

"I see," continued Riquet with the Tuft, "that this proposal disturbs you, and I do not wonder at it; but I will give you a

whole year in which to make up your mind about it."

The Princess had so little sense, and at the same time so great a desire to have some, that she imagined that the end of this year would never come; so she accepted the proposal which was made to her. She had no sooner promised Riquet with the Tuft that she would marry him in a year from that day than she realized a great change in herself; she found herself saying with incredible ease whatever she wished, and saying it, too, in a clever, fluent, and natural manner.

She began at that moment a brilliant conversation with Riquet with the Tuft, which she sustained with such ease that Riquet began to think that he had given her more wit than he had reserved for himself.

When she returned to the palace the court did not know what to think of so sudden and extraordinary a change; for now she said as many sensible and extremely clever things as before she had said stupid and silly ones. The whole court was delighted beyond

measure over it; the younger sister was the only one who did not share the general happiness; for, having no longer any advantage over her sister in the line of wit and



sense, she appeared beside her a homely, disagreeable girl.

The King himself was now guided by the advice of the elder sister, and sometimes would even hold a meeting of the council in her apartments. As the report of this change spread everywhere, all the young Princes of neighboring kingdoms made efforts to gain her favor, and almost all of them asked for her hand in marriage; but she did not find

any one who had enough wit to satisfy her. So she heard them all without binding herself to any one of them.

However, there came one so powerful, so rich, so witty, and so handsome that she could not help feeling a great liking for him. When her father saw this he told her that he was leaving her to be her own mistress in the matter of choosing a husband, and that she had only to express her wishes. She was so sensible that she knew so serious a matter deserved her careful consideration; so she thanked her father and asked him to give her time to think it over.

She went, by chance, to walk in the same wood where she had met Riquet with the Tuft, to deliberate on what she should do. While she was walking in deep reflection she heard a dull noise under her feet, as of a great many people running busily to and fro. Listening more attentively she heard one say, "Bring me that saucepan"; another, "Give me that kettle"; and a third, "Put some wood on the fire."

At that moment the ground opened, and she saw under her feet a great kitchen full of cooks, scullions, and all sorts of servants and people necessary to prepare a magnificent feast. There came forward a company of twenty or thirty cooks, with larding



needles in their hands and foxtails in their caps, who took their places in one avenue of the wood about a very long table, and went to work busily, keeping time with a tuneful song.

The Princess, in astonishment at the sight, asked them for whom they were working.

“For Prince Riquet with the Tuft, madam, whose wedding takes place to-morrow,” replied their chief.

The Princess, more surprised than ever, remembered all at once that it was that day twelvemonth on which she had promised to marry Prince Riquet. At the thought she was ready to sink into the ground. What made her forget was that when she made the promise she was very silly; and when she took the new sense that the Prince bestowed on her, she forgot all that she had done in the days of her stupidity. She walked on, but had not taken thirty steps before Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, magnificently attired like a man who was going to be married.

“You see, madam,” said he, “that I am exact in keeping my word; and I do not doubt that you are come to fulfill yours, and to make me, by giving me your hand, the happiest man in the world.”

“I will confess frankly to you,” replied the Princess, “that I have not yet made up

my mind in this matter, and that I do not believe that I shall ever be able to consent to what you desire.”

“You astonish me, madam,” said Riquet with the Tuft.

“That I can well believe,” said the Princess; “and assuredly if I had to do with a clown or a man of no sense, I should find myself very much at a loss. ‘A Princess always keeps her word,’ he would say to me, ‘and you must marry me, since you have promised to do so.’ But as he to whom I speak is the man of all others in the world who has the most sense, I am sure he will hear reason. You know that when I was only a fool I could hardly make up my mind to marry you. Now that I have the sense which you gave me, which makes me much harder to please, how can you expect me to come to a decision to-day which I could not agree to before? If you thought seriously of marrying me, you made a great mistake in removing my stupidity and making me see things more plainly than I did before.”

“If a man without wit or sense,” replied Riquet, “would be justified in reproaching you for breaking your word, why do you wish, madam, that I should not make use of the same right in a matter where the happiness of my whole life is at stake? Is it reasonable that persons of wit and sense should be worse off than those who have none? Can you pretend this, — you who are so wise and who wished so much to be? But come to the point, if you please. Except for my ugliness is there anything in me which displeases you? Do you object to my birth, my sense, my temper, or my manners?”

“Not at all,” said the Princess; “I like in you all that you have mentioned.”

“If that is the case,” replied Riquet with the Tuft, “I shall soon be happy, for you have the power to make me the most handsome of men.”

“How can that be?” asked the Princess.

“It can be done,” replied Riquet with the Tuft, “if you love me enough to desire that it should be; and in order that you may

have no doubt about it, know that the same fairy who at my birth bestowed on me the power of making clever the person I love best, has given you the power of making as handsome as you please him whom you love best and for whom you desire this favor."

"If that be the case," said the Princess, "I wish with all my heart that you may be the comeliest and handsomest Prince in the world, and I bestow on you this gift in so far as I am able."

The Princess had no sooner pronounced these words than Riquet with the Tuft seemed to her eyes the comeliest, handsomest, and most pleasing man she had ever seen.

Some people say that it was not the fairy's charm, but love alone which made this great change. They declare that the Princess, when she had reflected upon the perseverance of her lover, upon his discretion, and all the good qualities of his heart and mind, saw no longer the deformity of his body nor the ugliness of his face; that

his hump seemed to her no more than the grand air of a man who put on a look of importance; that where before she had noticed that he limped badly, she now found it nothing more than a careless grace of carriage which charmed her. They tell, too, how his eyes, which were squinting, appeared to her on that account the more brilliant, while their irregularity passed in her judgment as a mark of the warmth of his love; and finally that his great red nose gave, in her opinion, a martial and heroic air to his appearance.

However that may be, the Princess promised immediately to marry him, provided he obtained the consent of the King her father. The King knew that his daughter had a high esteem for Riquet with the Tuft, and was well informed, too, as to the cleverness and prudence of the Prince. So he received him gladly as his son-in-law. The next day their wedding was celebrated as Riquet with the Tuft had foreseen, and according to the orders which he had given long before.



SNOWDROP

ONCE upon a time, in the middle of winter, when the snowflakes were falling like feathers from the sky, a queen sat sewing at a window framed in black ebony. And as she sat sewing and looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger with the needle, and three drops of blood fell on the snow outside. Because the red looked so beautiful on the white snow, she thought to herself, "How I should like to have a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of this ebony frame!"

Very soon after this she had a little daughter whose hair was black as ebony, and whose cheeks were red as blood, while her skin was white as snow; so they called her Snowdrop. But not long after her birth the Queen died.

When Snowdrop was a year old the King took another wife. She was a beautiful woman, but so proud and haughty that she could not bear to have any one surpass her in beauty. She had a magic mirror, and when she stood before it gazing at herself, she would say,

“Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

Then the mirror would reply,

“Queen, so beautiful and tall,
Thou art fairest of them all.”

Then she was content, for she knew the mirror always spoke the truth.

But Snowdrop was growing prettier and prettier every day, and when she was seven years old she was so beautiful that she was

even fairer than the Queen herself. One day when the Queen asked her mirror the usual question,

“Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

it answered,

“Lady Queen, thou art fairest here,
But Snowdrop is fairer far, 't is clear.”

Then the Queen was terrified and turned every shade of green in her jealousy. From that hour she hated Snowdrop so bitterly that she was thrown into a secret passion every time she saw her. And every day envy and pride grew up swiftly like evil weeds in her heart, till she had no rest day or night.

At last she sent for a huntsman and said to him: “Take the child out into the wood, and never let me see her again. You are to kill her and bring me her heart as a token that you have done it.”

The huntsman obeyed, and took Snowdrop into the wood; but when he drew out his hunting knife to kill her, she began to

weep and said, "O dear huntsman, spare my life; I will run away into the wild forest and never come home again."

And because she was so beautiful the huntsman took pity on her and said, "Well, run away then, poor child." For he thought to himself, "The wild beasts will soon devour her." But yet it seemed as if a stone had been rolled from his heart because he did not have to kill her.

As a young boar came running by just then, he stabbed it, and took the heart to the Queen as proof that Snowdrop was dead. The wicked woman had it cooked in salt and ate it, thinking she had made an end of Snowdrop.

But when the poor child found herself all alone in the great forest, even the trees and their leaves began to seem terrible to her, and she was so frightened that she did not know what to do. She began to run, and ran over the sharp stones and through the brambles, and the wild beasts ran past her, but they did her no harm. She ran as far



as her feet would carry her, till it was nearly evening. Then she saw a little house and went into it to rest herself. Everything in the little house was very small, but cleaner and neater than anything you can think of. A small table covered with a white cloth stood ready with seven small plates, and by each plate were a spoon, knife, fork, and cup. Against the wall stood seven little beds, side by side, covered with snow-white counterpanes.

Snowdrop was so hungry and so thirsty that she ate a bit of bread and a little stew from each plate, and drank a drop of wine out of each cup, for she did not wish to take all from one portion. Then feeling very tired she lay down on one of the little beds, but it was not comfortable. She tried them all in turn, but one was too long, another too short, till she came to the seventh, which was just right; so she lay down upon it, said her prayers, and fell asleep.

When it was quite dark the masters of the little house came home. They were

seven little dwarfs, who dug and delved in the mountains for ore. They lighted their seven little lamps, and as soon as the room was full of light they saw that some one had been there, for all was not in the same order in which they had left it.

The first said, "Who has been sitting on my chair?"

The second said, "Who has been eating off my plate?"

The third said, "Who has been eating some of my bread?"

The fourth said, "Who has been tasting my stew?"

The fifth said, "Who has been using my fork?"

The sixth said, "Who has been cutting with my knife?"

The seventh said, "Who has been drinking out of my cup?"

Then the first dwarf looked around and saw a little hollow in his bed, and asked, "Who has been lying on my bed?" The others came running up and exclaimed,

“And mine! and mine!” But the seventh, when he came to his bed, saw Snowdrop lying there fast asleep. He called the others, who cried out in astonishment and held up their little lamps to see better when they found Snowdrop sleeping there.



“Heavens!” they cried; “what a beautiful child!” and were so pleased that they did not wake her, but let her sleep on in the little bed. The seventh dwarf slept with his companions, one hour in each bed, and so got through the night.

When Snowdrop awoke in the morning and saw the seven little dwarfs, she was

frightened. But they were so friendly and asked her name so kindly that she took courage and answered, "I am called Snowdrop."

"How came you to our house?" they asked.

Then she told them how her stepmother had wanted to have her killed, how the huntsman had spared her life, and how she had run all day until she had found their little house.

The dwarfs talked a little together and then said: "Will you stay and keep house for us,—cook, make the beds, wash, sew, and knit? If you will, then you shall stay with us and want for nothing."

"Oh, I should love to," said Snowdrop. So she stayed with them and kept the house in order. Every morning the dwarfs went out into the mountains to dig for gold, and in the evening when they came back Snowdrop had their supper ready. But during the day she was left all alone and the good dwarfs warned her, saying, "Beware of your stepmother. She will soon find out

that you are here. Whatever you do, don't let any one into the house."

Now the Queen, believing that she had eaten Snowdrop's heart, had no doubt that she was again the most beautiful woman in the world; so stepping before her mirror one day she said,

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

Then the mirror replied,

"Lady Queen, thou art fairest here,
But Snowdrop up in the mountains near,
Who lives with the seven dwarfs, odd and queer,
A thousand times fairer doth appear."

Then she was startled and angry, for she knew that the mirror always spoke the truth, and she saw that the huntsman must have deceived her, and that Snowdrop was still alive. Once more she pondered day and night how she might destroy Snowdrop, for as long as she herself was not the fairest in all the land her jealous heart gave her no peace. At last she thought of a plan. She

stained her face and dressed herself like an old peddler woman, and was so changed that no one could have known her. In this disguise she went over the hills to the home of



the seven dwarfs. There she knocked at the door, calling out, "Fine wares to sell! fine wares to sell!"

Snowdrop peeped out of the window and said, "Good day, my good woman, what have you to sell?"

“Good wares, fine wares,” she answered; “bodice laces of all colors,” and she pulled out one that was woven of gay-colored silk.

“Surely I may let this honest woman in,” thought Snowdrop; so she unbarred the door and bought the pretty lace.

“Child, child,” said the old woman, “what a figure you have! Come, let me lace you properly for once.”

Snowdrop had no suspicion, but stood before the woman and let her lace her with the new lace. But the old woman laced her so quickly and so tightly that it took Snowdrop’s breath away, and she fell down as though dead.

“Now you are no longer the fairest,” said the Queen, and she hurried away.

Not long after, toward evening, the seven dwarfs came home and were terribly frightened to see their dear little Snowdrop lying on the floor, still and motionless as if she were dead. They lifted her up, and when they saw how tightly she was laced, they cut the laces in two; then she began to

breathe a little and gradually came back to life. When the dwarfs heard what had happened they said: "The old peddler woman was none other than the wicked Queen. Snowdrop, you must take care and let no one in when we are not at home."

The wicked Queen went straight to her mirror the minute she got home and said,

"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?"

Then the mirror answered as before,

"Lady Queen, thou art fairest here,
But Snowdrop up in the mountains near,
Who lives with the seven dwarfs, odd and queer,
A thousand times fairer doth appear."

When she heard this she turned pale with fright and anger, for she knew that Snowdrop must have come back to life again.

"I will think of some way to make an end of her once for all," she said to herself.

By means of witchcraft, in which she was skilled, she prepared a poisoned comb. Then she took the form of another old

woman. She went over the hills till she came to the house of the seven dwarfs, and knocking at the door she called out, "Wares, fine wares, to sell!"

Snowdrop looked out of the window and said, "Go away; I am not to let any one in."

"But surely you are allowed to look out," said the old woman; and she held up the poisoned comb for her to see.

The child was so pleased with it that she let herself be beguiled, and opened the door. When they had settled their bargain the old woman said, "Now I will comb your hair properly for once."

Poor little Snowdrop had no thought of evil and let the woman do as she pleased, but hardly had she put the comb in the child's hair when the poison took effect, and she fell down unconscious.

"Well, my beauty, you are really done for now," said the wicked woman, and she went away.

Fortunately it was near evening, when the seven dwarfs always came home. When

they saw Snowdrop lying on the floor as if she were dead, they at once suspected the stepmother had been there again; so they searched till they found the poisoned comb, and as soon as they had drawn it out, Snow-



drop came to herself and told them what had happened. Again they warned her to be on her guard and to open the door to no one.

As soon as the Queen got home she went to her mirror and said,

“Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

But the mirror replied as before,

“Lady Queen, thou art fairest here,
But Snowdrop up in the mountains near,
Who lives with the seven dwarfs, odd and queer,
A thousand times fairer doth appear.”

When she heard these words she actually trembled and shook with rage.

Then she went into a secret room, which no one but herself ever entered, and there she prepared a poisoned apple. Outwardly it looked very pretty, with such rosy cheeks that every one who saw it would long to eat it, but any one who ate a piece of it would be sure to die. When the apple was ready she stained her face and dressed herself as a peasant woman, and so she went over the hills to the home of the seven dwarfs. She knocked at the door as usual, but Snowdrop put her head out of the window and said, “I am not to let any one in; the seven dwarfs have forbidden me.”

“It is all the same to me,” answered the woman. “I shall soon get rid of my apples. There, I will give you one.”

“No,” said Snowdrop, “I am not to take anything.”

“Are you afraid of poison?” said the woman. “See, I will cut the apple in two. You eat the red cheek and I will eat the white.”

The apple was so cunningly made that only the red side was poisoned. Snowdrop longed to eat the fine apple, and when she saw that the peasant woman was eating it herself, she could resist no longer, but stretched out her hand and took the poisoned half. But hardly had she touched the first bite to her lips before she fell down dead. Then the cruel Queen looked down on her with fiendish delight, and laughing aloud she cried, “As white as snow, as red as blood, as black as ebony; this time the dwarfs cannot wake you.”

When she got home and asked the mirror,

“Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

it answered at last,

“Queen, so beautiful and tall,
Thou art fairest of them all.”

Then her jealous heart was at rest — at least, as far as a jealous heart can ever be at rest.

When the dwarfs came home in the evening they found Snowdrop lying on the floor, and she neither breathed nor moved. They lifted her up and looked to see if they could find anything poisonous. They unlaced her bodice, washed her with water and wine, but all in vain; the child was dead, and remained dead. Then they laid her on a bier, and the seven dwarfs seated themselves round her, and wept for her, and mourned for three days. They were going to bury her, but she looked so fresh and lifelike and had such pretty color in her cheeks that they said, “We cannot lay her away in the dark ground.”

So they had a transparent coffin made of glass, and they laid her in it, and wrote on the lid in letters of gold her name, and that she was a King's daughter. Then they put the coffin on the top of the mountain, and one of the dwarfs always stayed by it and



kept watch over it. And the birds came, too, and mourned for Snowdrop, — first an owl, then a raven, and last of all a little white dove.

Snowdrop lay a long, long time in the coffin unchanged, looking as if she were asleep; for she was still as white as snow, as red as blood, and her hair as black as ebony.

Now it happened that one day a King's son came into the wood and went to the dwarfs' house to spend the night. He saw the coffin on the mountain with beautiful Snowdrop lying in it, and when he had read what was written on the lid in letters of gold, he said to the dwarfs: "Let me have the coffin. I will give you whatever you like for it."

But the dwarfs said, "No; we would not part with it for all the gold in the world."

But he replied: "Then give it to me as a gift, for I cannot live without Snowdrop to gaze upon. I will honor and prize it as my dearest possession."

When he spoke in this way the good dwarfs took pity on him and gave him the coffin, and the Prince had his servants bear it away upon their shoulders. Now it happened that one of them stumbled over a tree stump. This jolted the coffin so sharply that the poisoned piece of apple which Snowdrop had bitten fell out of her throat. Before long she slowly opened her eyes, lifted up the lid of the coffin, and sat up alive once more.

“Oh, dear!” she cried, “where am I?”

The Prince answered joyfully, “You are with me,” and told her all that happened, saying as he finished the story: “I love you better than any one in the world. Will you come with me to my father’s palace and be my wife?”

Snowdrop consented and went with him, and their wedding was celebrated with great state and splendor.

Now Snowdrop’s wicked stepmother was one of those invited to the feast. When she had arrayed herself in beautiful clothes for

the occasion she went to the mirror and said,

“Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

The mirror answered,

“Lady Queen, thou art fairest here,
But the young Queen now at the palace near
A thousand times fairer doth appear.”

Then the wicked woman uttered a curse and was so beside herself with anger and mortification that she did not know what to do. At first she resolved not to go to the wedding at all, but she felt she could have no peace till she had seen the young Queen. When she went in she recognized Snow-drop and stood stock-still with rage and fear. She knew she could not be again the most beautiful woman in the world, and her anger was so great that she fell dead at the feast.



THE WHITE CAT

ONCE upon a time there was a King who had three brave and handsome sons. As they grew to be fine, tall young men, he began to be afraid that they might want to rule over the kingdom before he was dead. The King was old, but was as vigorous in mind as ever he had been, and did not wish to give up his crown. He thought that the best way to live in peace was to divert their minds by promises he could always avoid fulfilling.

He called his sons to him and said: "You will agree with me, my dear children, that I

shall soon be getting too old to reign any longer. I want, therefore, to give my crown to one of you. But it is only fair that in return for such a gift you should do something to make life pleasant for me after I have retired into the country. I should like to have a pretty, clever, faithful little dog who would be good company for me. So without any regard to your ages, I declare to you that the one who brings me the most beautiful little dog shall be my heir."

The Princes were surprised at their father's sudden fancy for a little dog, but were well pleased with the plan. They took leave of the King, who gave them plenty of money and told them that in a year without fail they must all return, and on the same day at the same hour bring him their little dogs.

Before they started they went to a castle outside the town and held a great feast, at which they promised always to be friends, and not be jealous of one another in this matter. They agreed that the successful

one should share his good fortune with the others. Then they set out, deciding that they would meet at the same castle on their return and go together to the King. Each took a different road. All three met with many adventures, but I am only going to tell you about those of the youngest.



He was young, and gay, and handsome, and had all the accomplishments a Prince should have; as for his courage, he was simply fearless.

No day passed without his buying some dogs. He bought big dogs and little dogs,

house dogs, hunting dogs, mastiffs, greyhounds, spaniels, and lapdogs, — dogs of every kind. As soon as he bought a pretty one he was sure to see another that was prettier, and then he had to sell the others and get that one, for he found it impossible to take thirty or forty thousand dogs about with him.

One evening he entered a great forest. Night came on suddenly and with it a violent storm of thunder and lightning; the rain began to pour down. He took the first path he came to, and after he had walked a long time he saw a faint light and hoped he was coming to some house where he might find shelter for the night. Guided by the light he reached the gates of the most magnificent castle that could be imagined. The gate was of gold, covered with rubies, and it was the bright, red light which shone from them that the Prince had seen. The walls were of transparent porcelain, painted in many colors with pictures out of fairy tales, the adventures of the Sleeping

Beauty in the Wood, and of Cinderella, and a hundred others.

Upon the door was a deer's foot fastened by a chain of diamonds. The Prince pulled it and heard a silver bell ring. Instantly the door flew open, but he could see nothing but a dozen hands in the air, each holding a torch. He was so astonished that he hesitated to enter, but he felt himself pushed forward from behind by other hands. He was somewhat uneasy, but put his hand on his sword and walked on. He entered a hall paved with lapis lazuli, where he heard two enchanting voices singing these words,

“Fear not these hands that float in space,
Nor anything else that here you see,
Unless from the charms of a beautiful face
You would keep your heart still fancy free.”

This welcome reassured the Prince. The hands guided him toward a large door of coral, which opened of itself and admitted him to a hall of mother-of-pearl. Out of this opened other rooms so richly adorned with paintings and precious stones and so

brilliantly lighted with thousands of hanging lamps that he was dazzled by their magnificence. When he had passed through sixty rooms the hands that were guiding him stopped, and a most comfortable armchair moved of itself toward the fireplace. At the same moment the fire was lighted, and hands which he noticed were very beautiful — small, white, plump, and well proportioned — took off his wet clothes. Then they presented him with new garments made of the finest materials and richly embroidered with gold and emeralds. They combed his hair and waited on him with the greatest skill, though sometimes they appeared so suddenly that they made him start.

When his toilet was complete — and I assure you the fine costume became him well — the hands conducted him to a splendid room, upon the walls of which were painted the histories of Puss in Boots and other famous cats. The table was laid for two, with gold knife, fork, and spoon for each; the sideboard was covered with vessels

and glasses of crystal set with precious stones. The Prince was wondering who the second cover was for, when in came a company of cats, carrying guitars. They took their places on a little platform, and, under the leadership of a cat who had a book of music before her and beat time with a roll of paper, they began to mew each in a different key, and to draw their claws across the strings of their guitars, making the strangest music that was ever heard. The Prince stopped his ears, but even then he could not keep from laughing heartily at the positions and grimaces of these novel musicians.

He was wondering what queer thing would happen to him next when he saw a tiny figure enter the room. It was covered by a long black veil. Two cats bearing black cloaks and carrying swords conducted it, and a retinue of cats followed.

The Prince was more astonished than ever; he did not know what to think. The little black figure approached him and threw



back the veil. Then he saw the most beautiful white cat that ever was or ever will be. She looked very young and sad, and in a sweet voice that went straight to the Prince's heart she said to him, "King's Son, you are welcome; the Queen of cats is glad to see you."

"Madam Cat," said the Prince, "it is very kind of you to receive me with such courtesy, but surely you are no ordinary cat. Your gift of speech and your magnificent castle are strong proof to the contrary."

"King's Son," replied the White Cat, "I beg of you to spare me these compliments, for I am very simple in my speech. But now," she added, "let supper be served and let the musicians be silent, for the Prince does not understand what they are saying."

"Are they really saying anything, madam?" asked the Prince.

"Certainly," she answered. "We have excellent music here. If you stay with us a little while, you will soon learn to appreciate it."

“Indeed, I shall be a ready scholar,” said the Prince, politely.

Supper was now served by the mysterious hands. Soup made of white mice was brought to the White Cat. When a plate was put before the Prince he did not like to taste it. But the White Cat assured him that his soup was made of pigeons, and that none of the dishes intended for him contained either rats or mice. They talked together on different subjects, and the Prince found that she knew all about what was going on in the world, and was well informed along many lines.

After supper the White Cat invited her guest into another room fitted up with a stage, where the cats danced and acted for their amusement. Then the White Cat said good night to him, and the hands conducted him to an apartment just opposite the one he had been in before. It was hung with butterflies' wings of every color; there were mirrors that reached from the floor to the ceiling; and his bed was draped in

gauze, fastened with a thousand knots of ribbon. The Prince went to bed in silence, for he did not know how to begin a conversation with the hands that waited on him.



In the morning he was awakened by noise and confusion outside, and the hands came quickly and dressed him in hunting costume. He looked out into the courtyard and saw more than five hundred cats making preparation for this holiday, for the White Cat was going hunting. He was led to a wooden horse, which he seemed to be

expected to mount. He did so, and to his surprise it galloped off gayly.

The White Cat was riding a monkey, which went very fast and carried her even to the tops of trees when she wanted to reach eagles' nests. The cats ran after rabbits and hares and caught them, and the kittens climbed everywhere for birds. The Prince had never enjoyed a hunt more. When the hunt was over they returned to the castle, and the Prince and the White Cat supped together as before.

So the days passed in all kinds of amusements, and the Prince thought only of the little White Cat with whom he was so happy. But she knew when he ought to return, and as he had quite forgotten, she reminded him.

"Do you know," she said, "that you have only three days in which to look for the little dog your father wants, and that your brothers have found beauties?"

The Prince came to himself and was astonished at his forgetfulness.

“Why, how came I to forget such an important errand?” he said. “What shall I do? I can never get home in time, much less find a dog.” And he began to be very much vexed and distressed.

But the White Cat comforted him, saying, “King’s Son, do not vex yourself; I am your friend. You can stay here another day, for the good wooden horse will take you to your country in less than twelve hours.”

“I thank you, beautiful White Cat,” said the Prince; “but it is not enough that I return to my father; I must take him a little dog.”

“Look,” said the White Cat; “here is an acorn in which is a little dog prettier even than the one in the dog star.”

“O Madam Cat,” said the Prince, “you are making fun of me.”

“Put the acorn to your ear,” said she.

He obeyed and heard a little sound inside, “Bow-wow!” The Prince was delighted, for a dog that could be shut up in an acorn must be very tiny. He was so eager to see

it that he wanted to open the acorn, but the White Cat told him it might be cold on the journey, and it would therefore be better to wait until he was in his father's presence. He thanked her a thousand times, and said good-by very sadly when he started out.

"The days with you have passed so quickly," he said, "I only wish I could take you along with me."

But at this proposal the White Cat only sighed deeply.

The Prince was the first to arrive at the place where the three brothers agreed to meet. They embraced each other affectionately and began to tell their adventures. But the Prince did not tell his real adventures, and showed only a common cur, letting his brothers think that this was the one he was going to show the King. They laughed at him and showed him two beautiful little dogs in baskets.

When they reached the palace every one crowded about to welcome them. They went into the King's hall. He did not know

in whose favor to decide, for the dogs of the two elder sons seemed equally beautiful. They were already making their plans about sharing the crown when the youngest drew out of his pocket the acorn which the White Cat had given him. He opened it, and there was a wonderful little dog with silky white hair and long ears lying on cotton wool. The Prince put it through a ring without its touching the sides. Then he placed it on the ground, and it got up at once and began to dance. The King did not know what to say, for it was impossible to imagine anything more beautiful than this little dog.

But he had not the least desire to part with his crown. The tiniest gem of it was dearer to him than all the dogs in the world. He told his children that as they had all succeeded so well the first time, he would ask them to go once more. This time he would give them a year to seek by land and sea a piece of linen so fine that it could be drawn through the eye of the finest needle.

Each departed his own way. Our Prince mounted the wooden horse again and rode back with all speed to the White Cat. He found all the doors open and the windows, roofs, towers, and walls lighted brilliantly. The hands came to meet him and led the wooden horse off to the stable, while the Prince hastened to the room of the White Cat. She was asleep in a little basket on a white satin cushion, but she started up when the Prince came in and received him with the greatest joy.

“How could I hope that you would come back to me, King’s Son?”

The Prince caressed and petted her and told her of his journey. Then he told her what the King wanted this time and asked her for help, for the request seemed impossible to him. The White Cat looked serious and said she must think the matter over; fortunately there were cats in the castle who spun very well; if it could be done they could do it. She would set them to it, and he need take no care.

The second year passed as quickly and happily as the first. Presently the White Cat told him that the year was gone, and that he need not be at all anxious about the linen, as she had a piece ready for him.



“This time I can give you an equipage suited to your rank,” she added; and bade him look out into the courtyard. There stood a splendid open carriage enameled in flame-colored gold. Twelve snow-white horses

harnessed in fours drew it; their trappings were of flame-colored velvet embroidered with diamonds. A hundred coaches, each drawn by eight horses and filled with richly dressed nobles, were ready to accompany him. A thousand guards were in waiting behind to end the procession.

“Go!” she said to the Prince; “and when you appear at your father’s court in such state, he will surely not refuse you the crown you deserve. Here is a walnut; do not crack it until you are before him. Then you will find in it the piece of linen you asked of me.”

“Dear White Cat,” said the Prince, “how can I ever thank you? If you will only consent to it, I will gladly give up all thought of ever being King and stay here with you.”

“King’s Son,” she replied, “it is very good of you to care so much for a little white cat who is good for nothing but to catch mice; but you must go.”

So the Prince kissed her paw and set out. They did not stop at all until they came to

the King's palace where the two elder brothers had already arrived. They displayed their pieces of linen, which were indeed so fine that they would go through the eye of a big needle; but the King, who was very glad of some excuse, sent for a very small needle that he had selected and had kept locked with the State treasure. Through this the linen would not go. The Princes were angry, and said that this was a trick that the King was playing on them.

But all at once there was a sound of trumpets and the youngest son appeared. The King and his two elder sons were astonished at his magnificence. After the young Prince had greeted them he took out the walnut and cracked it, thinking to find in it the piece of linen, but instead there was only a hazelnut. He cracked that and was surprised to see a cherry stone. The people who were looking on began to smile, and the King laughed to himself at the idea that a walnut should contain a piece of linen. The Prince cracked the cherry stone,

which contained a kernel. He opened that and found a grain of wheat, and in that was a millet seed. Then he began to wonder too, and murmured, "Why, White Cat, you have made game of me."



At that moment he felt a cat's claw on his hand, which scratched him so sharply that he bled. He hoped this was to encourage him, and opened the millet seed. Then, to the astonishment of every one, he drew forth a piece of linen four hundred ells long. Into it were woven all the kinds of birds.

and beasts and fishes in the world; the sun, moon, and stars; every sort of plant and tree that grows; and pictures of all the Kings and Queens in the world, and all their children. When the needle was brought the linen went through the eye six times with ease. The King and the two elder brothers sat still and did not say a word, for no one could help seeing that this linen was so beautiful and rare that nothing in the world could be compared to it.

Presently the King turned to his sons and said with a deep sigh: "Nothing consoles me more in my old age than to see your deference to my wishes. I desire to put you to further proof. Go once more and travel for a year, and at the end of that time he who brings back the most beautiful girl shall marry her and be crowned King on his wedding day. It is necessary that my successor should marry. I promise that I will not then put off the reward."

So they set out again, and our Prince returned in his splendid carriage to his dear

White Cat. This time she knew the day and hour of his arrival, and had the road strewn with flowers and grand preparations made to celebrate his return. Seated in a gallery from which she could see him coming, the White Cat awaited him.

“Well, King’s Son,” she said, “you have again returned without a crown.”

“Madam,” he replied, “your kindness has earned me one twice over, but I am persuaded that my father is unwilling to part with it himself.”

“No matter,” she said; “you must not give up trying to deserve it. As you must take back a lovely maiden next time, I will find you one that will gain you the prize. Now let us take no more care about the matter.”

Nothing passes more quickly than days spent without trouble or care. If the White Cat had not taken pains to remember the time when he must return to the court, the Prince would have surely forgotten it. But one evening she told him that it depended on himself alone whether he would take to

the court one of the most beautiful Princesses in the world.

“To do this,” she said, “you must take your sword and cut off my head and tail and throw them quickly into the fire.”

“I!” he exclaimed; “I cut off your head and tail! My dear White Cat, my love, am I to do such a cruel deed? Ah! perhaps you are testing my affections, but you need not doubt me.”

But she begged and begged, telling him that he must trust her and do as she said. The tears came into his eyes at the thought of killing his dear White Cat, and he begged her to spare him. But she was determined, and at last with a trembling hand he drew his sword, cut off her head and tail, and threw them in the fire. Immediately the most charming change imaginable took place. The body of the White Cat grew tall and became that of the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

The Prince was so overwhelmed with astonishment and delight that he could not

speaking. As he stood gazing at her, the door opened and a long train of lords and ladies entered the room, each with a cat's skin thrown over the shoulder. They bowed low before the Queen and showed their great joy at seeing her once more restored to her natural state. She received them graciously, but after a few moments dismissed them, saying that she wished to be alone with the Prince. To him she explained that she was a Princess who had been turned into a cat by some angry fairies. All her lords and ladies had been turned into cats, too, and her servants had been made invisible, all but their hands. To free them from this enchantment a handsome young Prince must come and love her well enough to do her bidding.

Together they set out for the King's court. Their chariot was more magnificent than any the Prince had ever seen. Even the horses' shoes were of emerald with diamond nails. Since the Princess was as lovely as she appeared, the Prince loved her

more dearly than ever, and they had a most delightful journey together.

When they came near the palace the Princess stepped into a chair made of crystal, carried by her guards, and drew the silken curtains about her so that she could not be seen. The Prince remained in the chariot and soon met his brothers walking in the palace grounds with two very beautiful Princesses. They asked him if he, too, had found a Princess. He said that the most beautiful thing he had seen was a little white cat, and her he had brought. They laughed at his simplicity.

“A cat!” they said. “Are you afraid that our palace will be eaten up by mice?”

The elder brothers and their Princesses got into carriages of gold and azure; the horses were decked with plumes, and nothing could have been more brilliant than the cavalcade. Our young Prince followed, and then came the crystal chair at which every one looked with admiration. The courtiers hastened to tell the King that the three Princes had arrived.

“Do they bring beautiful women with them?” asked the King.

“It is impossible that they should be surpassed,” was the reply, which did not seem to please the King.

The elder brothers entered first. The King received them kindly but could not choose between them. He turned to the youngest and said, “This time you come alone.”

“Your Majesty,” said the Prince, “will find in the crystal chair a little white cat which mews so prettily and has such soft paws that I am sure you will be charmed with her.”

The King smiled and went to draw back the curtains, but the Princess, by touching a spring, shattered the crystal and stood forth like the sun appearing from behind a cloud. Her fair hair floated over her shoulders; her soft white robe was lined with pink. She bowed gracefully before the King, who exclaimed, “This is the matchless woman who deserves my crown!”

“Sire,” she said, “I am not come to deprive you of a crown you fill so worthily.

I have by inheritance six kingdoms; permit me to offer one to you and give one to each of your sons. I ask no other return but your friendship and your consent to my



marriage with your youngest son. We shall have quite enough with three kingdoms.”

The King and all the court were carried away with joy and astonishment. The three weddings took place at once. Many months were spent in festivities. Then each King and Queen went to rule their own kingdom, and all lived happily ever after.

NOTES

Page 1. The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood. *Source:* "Contes de Ma Mère l'Oye," by Charles Perrault (1628–1703). *Parallel:* Grimm's "Little Briar Rose." The Perrault conclusion, describing at length the later adventures of the characters, we follow Grimm's example in omitting.

Page 16. The Emperor's New Clothes. *Source:* "Wonder Stories Told for Children," by Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875).

Page 27. The Golden Goose. *Source:* "Kinder- und Hausmärchen," by Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859). Three folklore motifs are united,—that of simple kindness rewarded, of the magic touch, which here creates an amusing situation, and of the unconscious success of a simpleton in making a royal personage laugh.

Page 34. The Elves and the Shoemaker. *Source:* Grimm. *Parallels:* Beside a wealth of tales in which elves or pixies help mortals, this very incident of their being kindly provided with clothes and refusing thereafter to work appears in several Scottish and English versions,—notably in "The Cauld Lad of Hilton." Elves always disappear when clothed.

Page 38. The King of the Cats. *Source:* The Folk-Lore Journal, II, 22. The best of five English variants of this tale.

Page 41. The Fir Tree. *Source:* Andersen.

Page 62. Pleiades. *Source:* "Fairy Tales from Afar, Translated from the Danish Popular Tales of Svend Grundtvig," by Jane Mulley. A good presentation of coöperation.

Page 67. Bluebeard. *Source:* Perrault. *Parallels:* Several, three in Grimm. Mr. Lang says, "Perrault's tale has a

great advantage over its popular rivals. It is at once more sober and more terrible, and possesses an epical unity of idea and action. The leading idea, of curiosity punished, of the box or door which may not be opened, and of the prohibition infringed with evil results, is of world-wide distribution."

Page 79. Thumbelina. *Source:* Andersen. In the tales of Hans Andersen we see the difference between the unconscious art of traditional folklore and the introspective, studied productions of a writer for children.

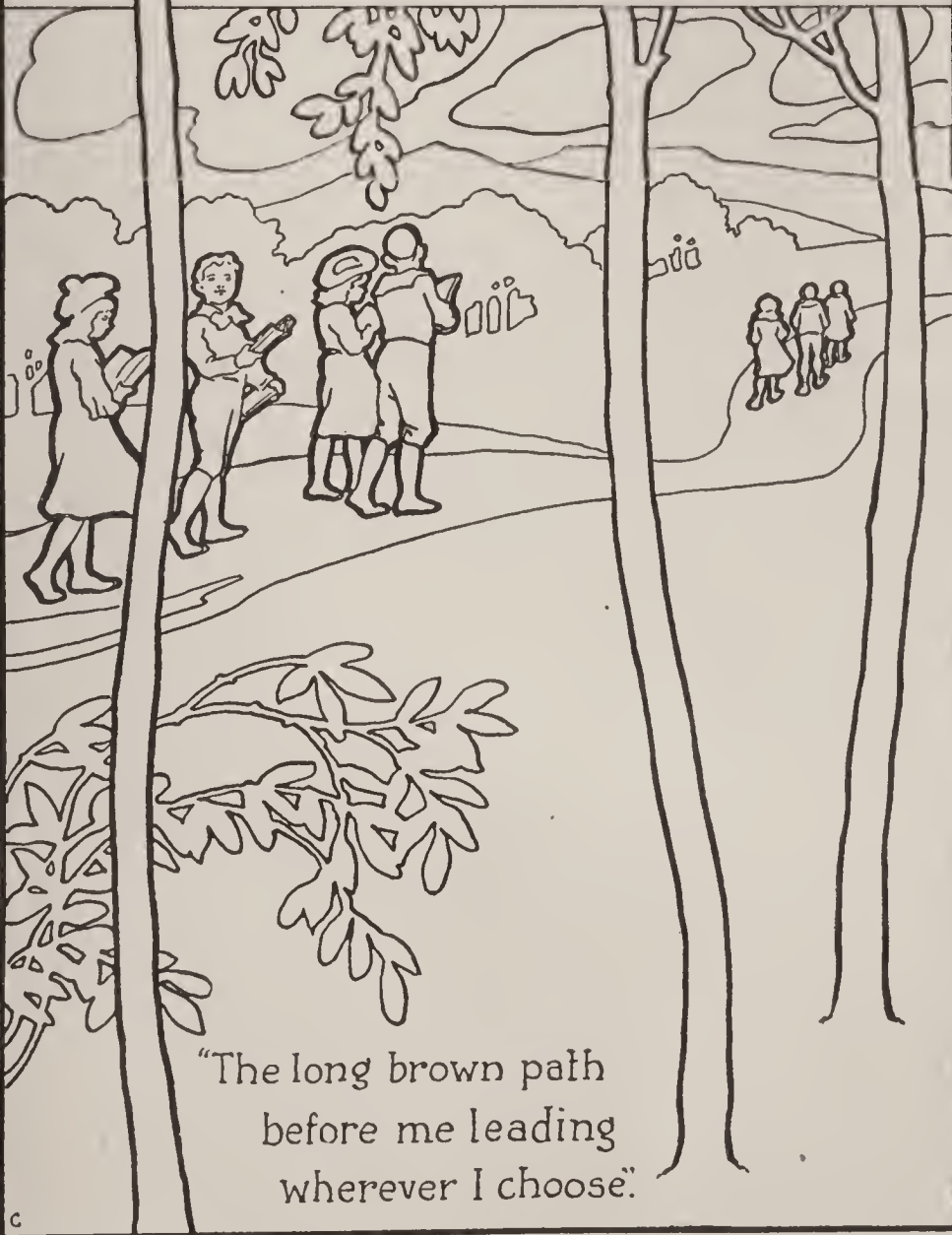
Page 105. Clever Alice. *Source:* Grimm. The first part is a typical satire on cleverness; the second recalls the old woman of the nursery rhyme who depended for identity on her little dog at home. One of a succession of Hans and Alice stories.

Page 114. Riquet with the Tuft. *Source:* Perrault. "The touch of the traditional and popular manner in the story is the love of a woman redeeming the ugliness of a man."

Page 130. Snowdrop. *Source:* Grimm. *Parallels:* A characteristic German tale with many variants. The symbolism of color, the wicked stepmother, the dwarfs in their little house, the child in the forest, and most of all the atmosphere and style make this a typical German story.

Page 152. The White Cat. *Source:* Madame D'Aulnoy. French text in "Cabinet des Fées," Vol. 3; English translation in "Novels and Tales of the Fairies, London, 1749." *Parallel:* Grimm's "The Three Feathers." Our version is much abridged. The delicacy and charm of Madame D'Aulnoy's style can be best appreciated in the descriptions of life in the enchanted palace and of the graceful little White Cat. The rude details of other stories, in which the older princes bring home farmer lasses who try to jump through a ring and break their arms and legs in the attempt, are here omitted. With characteristic refinement the story-teller allows no one to be discomfited; all live happily ever after, as the heroes and heroines of real fairy tales should.

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